

MAY/JUNE 2003 \$4,95/CANADA \$5,95 BIAS AND THE MIDDLE EAST

BOOKS: SWOFFORD ON SONTAG

IRAQ'S HARD LESSONS



THE NEW BATTLEFIELD • WHAT WE MISSED WHY JOURNALISTS RISK ALL



Winning the Pulitzer Prize for editorial cartooning takes tremendous talent. That goes twice for David Horsey.



Readers of the Seattle Post-Intelligencer and newspapers all over the country look to David Horsey's editorial cartoons to capture the crux of American politics and culture. His work is characterized not just by his keen wit, but also by his uncanny ability to communicate complex ideas and issues through one insightful image that says it all. He was recently awarded the 2003 Pulitzer Prize for his body of work over the past year. Many of his cartoons targeted the ironies and controversies surrounding President Bush's policies. This is not the first time that his blazing pen has illuminated the cracks in presidential armor. In fact, Horsey won his first Pulitzer in 1999 for his editorial cartoons depicting the chaos created by the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal. The challenge of the editorial cartoonist is to bring a clear, concise and often humorous view of the news that shapes our world. No one has achieved that better than David Horsey. By bringing readers the best journalism has to offer, Hearst Newspapers deliver excellence every day.



For more of David Horsey's cartoons, go to www.seattlepi.com/horsey



# Los Angeles Times wins three Pulitzer Prizes.

Congratulations to our 2003 Pulitzer winners.

### National reporting





Alan C. Miller and Kevin Sack Pulitzer Prize winners for "The Vertical Vision."

In a four-part series, Los Angeles Times investigative reporters Alan C. Miller and Kevin Sack chronicled the troubled and often tragic history of the Harrier aircraft.

For the better part of a year, they dug through military databases. They talked to Marine leaders, pilots and mechanics. And they interviewed at least one relative of each of the 45 Marines killed in Harrier accidents.

Their diligence produced Congressional action and dozens of supportive letters from family members, pilots and military officers. And now it has produced the highest honor a journalist can win.

# Feature writing



Sonia Nazario Pulitzer Prize winner for "Enrique's Journey."

In a gripping six-part series, Sonia Nazario retraced the harrowing journey of Enrique, a boy who left Honduras to find his mother in the United States. Nazario and photographer Don Bartletti braved street gangs and corrupt cops, rode freight trains for more than 800 miles and walked nearly 100.

It was journalism at its compelling best. A fact now recognized by the Pulitzer judges.

# Feature photography



Don Bartletti Pulitzer Prize winner for "Enrique's Journey."

Don Bartletti took tremendous risks to bring the plight of children like Enrique to life. He rode atop freight trains, sometimes jumping from car to car, to capture images of impoverished children making their way to the U.S.

Nazario's reporting and Bartletti's photographs have been recognized with a RFK Journalism Award Grand Prize and a George Polk Award for International Reporting. Now he has won the Pulitzer for feature photography.

Congratulations, also, to Pulitzer Prize finalists Nicolai Ouroussoff for criticism, Carolyn Cole for breaking news photography and Matt Black for feature photography. The Los Angeles Times has now won 30 Pulitzer Prizes since 1942 – 10 in the last six years.

To view 2003 Pulitzer Prize-winning Los Angeles Times stories and photographs, go to latimes.com/pulitzer

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"To assess the performance of journalism ... to help stimulate continuing improvement in the profession, and to speak out for what is right, fair, and decent"

From the founding editorial, 1961

MAY/JUNE 2003

**SPOTLIGHT** 

**DARTS & LAURELS** 

# SPECIAL REPORT: COVERING WAR IN REAL TIME TO DIE FOR Why reporters risk all. By Adeel Hassan THE NEW STANDARD Terence Smith grades the war coverage. THE WAR ON TV A missed opportunity. By Paul Friedman **DISPATCHES** Slices of the journalistic experience in Iraq. By Gordon Dillow, Michael Massing, John Donvan, Anthony Shadid, Borzou Daragahi, Chuck Stevenson, John Laurence, Bob Arnot, and John Burnett. SOUNDTRACK FOR WAR How TV news scored the invasion. By Nicholas Engstrom 'ANY WORD?' How Newsday got its journalists out of Saddam's prison. By Dele Olojede ARTICLES A 'LEARNING NEWSPAPER' In Anniston, a big plan to stay small. By Liz Cox THE OTHER WAR Ahmed Bouzid and Ira Stoll debate balance in Middle East coverage. Defining news in the Middle East: What's missing. By Bruce Wexler LISTS The Pulitzers, the National Magazine Awards, and the duPont Awards VOICES JOHN R. MACARTHUR Lies We Bought: The "Evidence" For War RHONDA ROUMANI One War, Two Channels JONATHAN A. KNEE False Alarm at the FCC? JOHN HATCHER Passion on the Local Level 'LIZ COX Scene: The Bias Busters' Ball BOOKS SHOOTING UNDER FIRE: THE WORLD OF THE WAR PHOTOGRAPHER REGARDING THE PAIN OF OTHERS By Susan Sontag Reviewed by Anthony H. Swofford BOOK REPORTS By James Boylan **OPENING SHOT** COMMENT LETTERS 4 **CURRENTS** 10



THE MISSION:
"Embedded"
journalists from
around the world
gathered at the
Kuwait Hilton
Hotel in early
March, on
their way to
witness the war.

COVER: MARIO TAMA/GETTY BASRA, APRIL I: A SOLDIER RESPONDS TO GUNFIRE AS JOURNALISTS TAKE COVER ABOVE: MICHAEL MACOR/ SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE/ CORBIS SABA

ROLE MODEL

THE LOWER CASE

AMERICAN NEWSROOM -Time magazine

INSIDE BACK COVER



# **CJR** OPENING SHOT

# The World As It Is

Thile the world was absorbing the shock of war, its journalists were, too. Horrors were witnessed and reported, and sixteen of us died doing what journalists do. This was real enough.

Before the war began, the reporting on its various rationales was not as thorough as it needed to be. Opinions were everywhere but the hard reporting that might have lifted the quality of the debate was not. Once the conflict began, however, it brought out the best in some of us. We think of the late David Bloom atop his vehicle, giving NBC viewers the sweep of the armored invasion; of Eric Westervelt on NPR, ducking fire to describe the 3rd Infantry's hard slog to the capital; of Anthony Shadid's heartbreaking stories for *The Washington Post* on the people under the bombs in Baghdad. And of dozens

of others who risked so much to witness history. The coverage was far from perfect, but some of its critics were off base.

It was disappointing, for example, to hear Fred Barnes, executive editor of *The Weekly Standard*, arguing from a cozy TV studio that the "weenies in the American press" were too casualty-sensitive. Some people don't want bad news. Others want more of it: the antiwar protestors, for example, who insisted that CNN was minimizing Iraqi civilian casualties; this so early in the war that CNN had not really had much chance to err one way or the other. Some people want to see the war they want to see, and now, the same people want to project their politics onto the events that flow out of the war. The journalist's job is to present the world as it is. Digitized American flags don't cut it. Real reporting and analysis do.

# CJR

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# **DEAN'S LIST**

Your cover story about Dean Singleton and his journalistic empire (CJR, March/April) was nauseatingly informative.

We'd had the misfortune to subscribe to his Los Angeles Daily News — a mean, deceitful pretense at unbiased reporting. Its failed attempt to divide Los Angeles was great news in our household. Car dealers, real estate interests, and local politicians joined the Daily News in clandestine meetings. Fortunately, the Los Angeles Times uncovered the "plot" and, later, helped prevent the planned "coup."

Though we believe competition is better than monopoly, our cancellation of the *Daily News* was no loss.

PRESTON P. BIRENBAUM Woodland Hills, California

Your piece on Dean Singleton's Salt Lake Tribune was well done, with one exception: the Tribune was not "reeling" when it entered the operating agreement with the Deseret News. Not only had circulation increased throughout the Deseret News's disastrous go-forbroke circulation campaign of 1947-52, but so had advertising linage and revenues. Because of the increased cost of defensive circulation promotions and the large strikecaused increases in the cost of newsprint, Tribune profits dropped from \$700,000 in 1947 to \$150,000 in 1952.

The *Tribune*, far from "reeling," agreed to the joint operation being assured of the majority profit share of a sole newspaper advertising medium in the rich Salt Lake market. The *Tribune* took over management of the *Deseret News* at the request of then Mormon Church president David O. McKay, who told his friend John Fitzpatrick, then



*Tribune* publisher, that *Deseret News* would cease publication if the *Tribune* refused.

Understanding this fact that the Tribune was the salvation of the never-did-well Deseret News and for fifty years thereafter the good and faithful steward of a very prosperous Deseret News - is necessary for recognizing the enormity of the Deseret News's machinations of the past five vears to deny ownership by the Kearns McCarthey family of the Tribune, which under that family's hundred-year ownership has been the protector of all Utahans against infringement of the civil, temporal, and political rights of this Mormon Church-State.

> J.W. GALLIVAN Publisher emeritus Salt Lake Tribune Park City, Utah

# KR COUNTERPOINT

In the March/April issue, CJR ran a relatively defamatory "sound bite" about Knight Ridder. It was an excerpt from the *Miami Herald* columnist Jim DeFede's February rant against the *Herald*'s parent corporation.

A week later, the Herald's executive editor, Tom Fieldler, ran a counterpoint column, which was not picked up by CIR. In fairness, here is an excerpt.

"What he [Fieldler] failed to say is that Knight Ridder's profit goals are more modest than some of its newspaper-industry peers, including Gannett, publisher of USA Today, or the Tribune Company, which publishes the Sun Sentinel in Fort Lauderdale. It's self-evident that a newspaper that fails to remain financially strong cannot long survive. Such was the fate of The Miami News and scores of other papers that didn't change with the times. John S. Knight himself reminded his editors that journalistic quality rested on a foundation of financial success. Knight Ridder papers the Herald chief among them - reflect that philosophy today and remain among the best in the industry."

POLK LAFFOON IV Vice president, corporate relations, Knight Ridder San Jose, California

# **OBJECT LESSON**

In his excellent article insisting that public opinion surveys, in an increasingly diverse America, should include languages other than English (CIR, January/February), Sergio Bendixen says of ethnic polling that: "Pollsters and the English-language media alike will simply be emulating King Canute's futility if they try to hold it back."

King Canute went to the seashore in order to prove to his fawning courtiers that even a monarch as powerful as he was could not hold back the inexorable forces of nature. His mission was the opposite of the "futility" with which Bendixen belabors him. Canute has been the victim of a bad press for more than a thousand years and it's about time someone set the record straight.

RON HAGGART Toronto, Ontario

# Congratulations to our Peabody Award Winners

Six Feet Under
The Gathering Storm
Russell Simmons Presents Def Poetry

Bo

# WAR AND THE BALANCE SHEET

News executives are crying about costs. But watch the bottom line.

BY LAWRENCE K. GROSSMAN

efore the opening salvos of the Iraq war, we heard bleak projections about the heavy price news organizations would pay to cover it. The headlines set the tone: NEWS INDUSTRY PLANS FOR WAR AND WORRIES ABOUT LOST ADS. NEWS INDUSTRY MAKES COSTLY PLANS FOR WAR. THREAT OF WAR ALREADY CURBS THE BUDGETS OF MARKETERS . . . . But a look at the numbers makes it clear that the

added costs of war reporting will have little if any impact on the balance sheets of the media behemoths that own most of the nation's press. Indeed, in many respects, war is a boon to the news business, not a liability.

True, when war comes, networks and some cable news channels provide wall-to-wall coverage and jettison most commercials for a few days. In 1991 NBC lost \$3.5 million to \$4 million in canceled ad revenue during each of the first three nights of the gulf war, which was almost four times more than it cost NBC News to report the war. The combined advertising losses of the three major networks totaled some \$25 million a day at the outbreak of the 1991 war, compared to the combined \$3 million a day their news divisions spent to report that war.

For this Iraq war, CNN set aside \$25 million to \$30 million, about what it spent to cover Desert Storm. Network news officials I talked to estimate their coverage costs during the first days of the war at \$1 million a day, about the same amount they spent on the first gulf war. NBC News expected its incremental Iraqi war costs this year would run about \$20 million. GE, NBC's owner, revealed that the war cost \$65 million in the first quarter from lost ad revenue and increased coverage costs. But significant offsets later on will reduce that financial burden. Most prime-time entertainment programs, preempted by war, will be rescheduled later in the year, thereby lowering future entertainment costs. Most ads canceled during the first days will run later as "make-goods," crowding the commercial schedule and enabling broadcasters and cable operators to raise their rates. The networks' prime-time magazine shows, bastions of nonfiction entertainment, help their news divisions amortize coverage costs by focusing on the war



rather than the fluff they customarily run. NBC News now can spread its cost of war coverage across its CNBC and MSNBC cable channels and Web sites, as well as its TV network and stations. And since war news blots out almost everything else, the cost of covering news elsewhere declines sharply.

Much of this war's economic impact on the media will depend, obviously, on how long Iraq stays centerstage. But elements of war reporting today tend to be less expensive than during Desert

Storm. Equipment is lighter, cheaper, easier to transport, and sturdier. Technology has improved radically. Videophones make it easy to transmit live from virtually anywhere.

During wartime, news audiences increase dramatically. The *Los Angeles Times* published an extra 200,000 copies a day during Desert Storm. *Newsweek* sales were up 90 percent. Network news audiences grew substantially. Thanks to the 1991 gulf war, CNN turned from a perpetual loss leader into a significant profit center, whose annual profits far exceeded the mere \$25 million it spent reporting Desert Storm.

When I ran NBC News, we retained McKinsey & Co., the management consultants, to analyze the costs of our crisis news coverage. McKinsey found that covering major breaking news of war and other disasters — no matter how dizzyingly expensive the cost of chartering airplanes, reserving satellites, originating programs abroad, and paying news crews overtime — is the most efficient way a news division can spend its money, because so much of what the money is spent on gets on the air.

Last year, the entire annual cost of NBC News accounted for less than one-half of one percent of GE's \$132 billion in revenue. NBC News didn't even rate a mention in GE's annual report. For GE, the extra money NBC News will spend to report the war will hardly be felt. That's also true of the other media conglomerates, for whom the extra millions spent on war reporting is pocket change. Which is why media complaints about the costs of war coverage sound lame. The Cox newspapers (17 dailies, 25 nondailies) accepted only three of the eight slots offered to embed its reporters with the military, explaining that the company "couldn't afford to fill" all eight, even though the papers' parent company made \$8 billion in revenues last year. How much could it have cost Cox to send five more reporters to cover the war, especially when the military would have supplied their room, board, and local transportation to Baghdad?

Lawrence K. Grossman, a former president of NBC News and PBS, is a regular columnist for CJR.

wo-year-old Kaden Cook had a rare and fatal heart disease. Without a transplant, there was no hope

His parents, Kevin and Trishann, allowed Detroit Free Press reporter Jeff Seidel and photographer Eric Seals to share with the paper's readers their five-month journey from anguish to unbounded jov.

The result was a series of seven stories testifying to the power of truly compelling storytelling.

"Kaden Cook, a boy with the heart of an old man, is fading away. The symptoms are subtle. Four hours before his second birthday party, Kaden is lethargic. Just kind of lying around. Disappearing.

From those first lines through to the series' end, Jeff's words and Eric's pictures connected with readers. Their stories moved multitudes to respond, with hundreds of letters, armfuls of toys and nearly \$20,000 in donations. But one response in particular said far more than

> anything else about the impact of

> > a well-told

an e-mail, a noted area oken Heart doctor wrote: "Jeff and

> like to know that a woman donated a few days ago as a direct result of the articles ... It's not a Pulitzer Prize, but you should know that you have helped save probably seven lives (heart, two lunas, liver, pancreas and two kidneys. not to mention bone and other tissue). Keep up the good work."

We celebrate great journalism every day at Knight Ridder. But we are especially proud of Jeff and Eric. Our congratulations to them and the Detroit Free Press for an extraordinary series. We're sure that they will indeed keep up the good work

And to Kaden and his family, we want to say how happy we are that we could be a part of their heartfelt story.

Knight Ridder. What a difference a newspaper can make.

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**DART** for removing yet more bricks from journalism's shaky wall, to:

**THE DENVER POST.** Above the fold in the November 25 sports section the *Post* presented legitimate reports, accompanied by an AP photo, on World Cup skiing; below the fold the page slid smoothly into what appeared to be further coverage of winter sports, the whole comprising a pleasingly integrated layout of photos, headlines, typeface, and text. In fact, however, the lower half-page was (as whispered in a microscopic, mid-page clue for hawk-eyed readers only) an "advertisement" for a video game version of National Hockey League playoffs. For contrast, see the rival *Rocky Mountain News*'s display on that very same day of that very same ad on a sports-section page — unassisted by matching news copy and unmistakably marked: PAID ADVERTISEMENT PAID ADVERTISEMENT PAID ADVERTISEMENT.

THE VANCOUVER SUN. The forty-two-column-inch centerpiece of the paper's front page on Friday, January 17, was a colorfully illustrated gee-whiz story on the digital services newly available to customers of Shaw Cable. Graphically instructing readers on "what you need" to purchase, say, a movie like Austin Powers in Goldmember, and larded with quotes from a company spokesman, the piece managed to mention the Shaw company's name some eighteen times. It did not, however, mention the four full pages of Shaw Cable ads that wrapped around the Sun's "Movie Weekend" section elsewhere in that issue (one of which included a fullpage graphic of Austin Powers in Goldmember). Nor did it mention an inside ad for a "Business Connection Luncheon" five days hence, at which the featured speaker would be Dennis Skulsky, "president and publisher of . . . The Vancouver Sun." Skulsky's topic: "The Business Community and the Media — The Secrets of Getting Your Message Out."

WTVH-TV. Although Syracuse viewers didn't know it at the time, some of those three-minute interviews — a car dealer on leasing options, a shop owner on jewelry, a financial planner on the stock market, a lawyer on personal-injury claims — that recently aired on the Granite Broadcasting station's five o'clock news-and-talk program *Central New York Live!* were part of advertising contracts with WTVH — and paid for, it turns out, by the car dealer, the shop owner, the financial planner, the lawyer. In a February 12 story exposing the deceptive practice, the *Syracuse Post-Standard* noted that, after being contacted by the paper, the station had made some gestures toward disclosure — gestures less than enthusiastic toward disclosure less than full.

**DART** to KTVU-TV in San Francisco and Ross McGowan, anchor of its early morning newscast, for lowering the ethical bar. In the course of countless interviews over the past five years, McGowan has bellied up to one particular city supervisor, Gavin Newsom, some eighty-four times, drawing out the politician's views on state and local politics, tending to his worthy pet projects, giving

viewers a taste of his personal high life, and generally boosting his shot at becoming mayor. At no time in those conversations, however, was mention ever made of the off-air relationship between interviewer and interviewee — namely, that McGowan is a partner (to the tune of \$25,000) in a company that operates a San Francisco bar and whose president is Gavin Newsom. But not to worry. As the anchor — with the full support of executive producer Rosemarie Thomas Schwarz — told the San Francisco Chronicle, which revealed the conflict of interest in a February 23 story: if something came up about his business partner that "needed the tough questions," he "like[s] to think" he'd ask them.

**LAUREL** to *The News & Observer*, in Raleigh, North Carolina, for bringing a bit more justice to the criminal justice system. Tipped that a small-time drug dealer was innocent of the brutal murder that had put him on death row, reporter Joseph Neff revisited the entire case, from analyzing court filings and tracking down witnesses to interviewing the attorneys and conferring with experts on such forensic arcana as the age of the maggots that had invaded the corpse. His investigation revealed, among other things, that prosecutors had withheld exculpatory evidence, that a damning witness had fabricated her testimony, and that the murder could have taken place only during a time when the convicted man was either out of the state or in jail on an unrelated, minor charge. Even as the second installment of "Time of Death" appeared in print, a Superior Court judge had overturned the conviction and ordered a new trial. Disturbingly, however, as Neff makes clear, that just outcome would not have been possible had the original sentence called for anything short of execution, such as life without parole: North Carolina law gives the right of access to all prosecution files on their cases to death-row inmates only.

**DART** to Reuters, for failing to make distinctions. Applying its special theory of relativity, the international news agency imposes an official ban on the use in its reports of the "emotive" word "terrorist," except in quotations (a post-9/11 policy memo by the global news director, Stephen Jukes, justified the ruling thusly: "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter"). Now a March 12 dispatch makes one wonder if another commonly used, demonstrably definable term - "suicide bomber" - is edging toward relativity as well. In a Gaza-datelined story by Nidal al-Mughrabi, Reuters reported that Saddam Hussein had given \$10,000 each to "twenty-two families of militants killed in fighting or of civilians killed during Israeli army offensives, incursions, or air strikes," and \$25,000 to "a family of a Palestinian suicide bomber." Helpfully doing the math, Reuters summed it all up in this indiscriminate lead: "Families of Palestinians killed by Israel received \$245,000 in checks from Saddam Hussein on Wednesday . . . ."

Darts & Laurels is written by Gloria Cooper, CJR's deputy executive editor. Nominations: gc15@columbia.edu, 212-854-1887.

# MSNBC's Bad Bargain

## In Its Desperation, the Network Made a Deal with the Devil

he current "narrative" in the cable news business goes this way: Fox News Channel is the ratings leader, CNN is a strong second, and MSNBC — the offspring of General Electric and Microsoft, with NBC News as its sibling — is so far behind as to be virtually a nonstarter (despite its exemplary coverage of the war). Recent indications are that MSNBC will do just about anything to get into the race.

Witness: In February the network hired Michael Savage, host of a widely syndicated radio talk show (more than 300 stations) to serve as host of an hour-long weekend call-in program titled *The Savage Nation* — also the title of Savage's extraordinarily popular book, the subtitle of which is: "Saving America From the Liberal Assault on Our Borders, Language and Culture."

So far so good. But let's sample some thoughts from Savage's book and radio show:

Immigrants: They come from "turd world nations," he tells his audience. "You open the door to them and the next thing you know they are defecating on your country and breeding out of control."

Blacks: It bothers him that TV correspondents in Iraq often interviewed black soldiers. "Ninety percent of front-line troops are white boys," he said. "So stop your big lie. Liberalism of this kind is not a philosophy, it's a mental illness." Ghetto children killed by guns are "not kids, they're ghetto slime."

Women: "Today in America we have a 'she-ocracy' where

a minority of feminist zealots rule the culture," and have "feminized and homosexualized much of America to the point where the nation has become passive, receptive, and masochistic." Before being hired by MSNBC, Savage called its reporter Ashleigh Banfield "the mind-slut." You get the idea. A few media voices have

been raised in response to Savage's views. The weekly New York Press wrote: "MSNBC's desperation has brought it down into the mud, and it's only going to sink deeper." Entertainment Weekly called Savage "a nasty, stupid piece of work — a puffed-up hate monger, pure

and simple-minded."

MSNBC also has hired the former Republican Representatives Joe Scarborough and Dick Armey and former Minnesota Governor Jesse Ventura. Savage's arrival is clearly part of a strategy by the network to mimic Fox News Channel's successful formula by appealing to conservative sentiment, although Fox has shown no sign of taking so low a road.

In a statement, MSNBC said the addition of Savage to its line-up "was made with the full awareness of his reputation for controversy . . . . We also strongly defend his new show as a legitimate attempt to expand the marketplace of ideas." Bob Wright, chairman of NBC, said Savage "brings a style that has a great deal of popularity." Savage, perhaps on orders from MSNBC, has been marginally less virulent so far on TV than he is on radio and in his book.

Nonetheless, we can only wonder how much hate, bigotry, and divisiveness General Electric and Microsoft are willing to underwrite in pursuit of audiences and profits.

# Trouble at the Times

# Why Did Top Editors Ignore Warnings About Jayson Blair?

t happens to priests and politicians. It happens to cops. A percentage of every group that holds itself to a high ethical standard succumbs to some combination of need and mendacity and betrays that standard, damaging colleagues and wounding institutions along the way. Journalism is not immune. We should know that by now.

The latest case is Jayson Blair at *The New York Times*, and the proper questions now are, What is it about the operation and culture of that newsroom that allowed a troubled cell to mutate into a cancer? And what can the rest of us learn from the episode?

The *Times* is to be commended for reporting the story on May 11, a four-page blockbuster that explained Blair's scary methods and corrected his falsehoods in the newspaper of record. Still, the piece was longer on Jayson Blair than it was on newsroom management. It did not fully explore, for example,

the question of whether some editors were so eager for this charming and ambitious young black reporter to succeed that they did not want to confront his shortcomings. Enemies of newsroom diversity now see Blair as exhibit A in their argument that diversity programs promote double standards. They are wrong. But that doesn't mean the implementation of such programs can't be critiqued. And diversity pressure is only a thread in a story with many ragged edges. Blair, for example, was apparently a master at what is politely called managing up.

The central lesson that the *Times* seems to draw so far is that, in an institution all about communication, the Blair episode represents a failure to communicate. That's the wrong lesson. From its own reporting it is clear that top *Times* editors dismissed serious warnings about Jayson Blair. This looks less like a failure to communicate than a failure to listen.

# WAR AND THE LETTERS PAGE: WHO'S COUNTING?

# With letters running against the war, editors wrestle with bias and balance

hile editorial-page takes on the war in Iraq have been mixed, a sampling of letters to the editor around the country shows that they were dominated by those opposed to the war. CJR polled letters-page editors at ten papers of various sizes and locations during the weeks of March 11, March 24, and April 7. In the first poll, most reported receiving at least twice as many antiwar as prowar letters. Only the *Odessa American*, a 26,000-circulation paper in west Texas, reported receiving more letters in support of the war.

Once the fighting started, four of the editors reported no change in opinion, while another four said that the ratio between pro and antiwar writers had tightened, but not reversed. Editors at the Ocala Star-Banner and The Syracuse Post-Standard noted that the opinions in the letters had become more complicated, with many writers expressing support for the troops while still not fully backing the war. The end of the war brought little change.

Perhaps more interesting than those ratios, however, were the editorial decisions about which letters to publish. Some editors published the letters in proportion to what was received, while others tried to balance letters from opposing sides equally despite the imbalance of what was submitted. All the editors emphasized that their papers' policy was to try to be objective. What's a fair-minded editor to do? To those outside the newsroom who have no way of knowing the volume or content of letters, either tactic can be misleading. Publishing the letters in a way that reflects what comes in may not accurately delineate the range of opinion in the community (angry folks tend to be more inclined to write), but creating an artificial balance to avoid bias charges seems even more distorted. And only smaller papers can publish all the letters, or even excerpts from each. Here's a suggestion that could help: a simple editors' note explaining the letters-selection process. 

— Sarah Secules

Paper	Week of 3/11	Week of 3/24	Week of 4/7	What to publish
Austin American-Statesman	Slightly more antiwar	Same	Same	Proportional
Chicago Tribune	7:3 (anti:pro)	1:1	1:1	Proportional
The (Eugene) Register-Guard	4:1	4:1	7:1	Equal
Lexington Herald-Leader	2:1	More pro-troops	1:1	Equal
Los Angeles Times	8:1 to 10:1	3:1	3:1	Proportional
Nashville Tennessean	7:3	Same	Same	Equal
Ocala Star-Banner	4:1 to 5:1	More pro-troops	4:1-5:1	Proportional
Odessa American	1:10	1:15	100% pro-war	Publish all
The Syracuse Post-Standard	4:1 to 5:1	More pro-troops	1:1	Excerpts of most
The Washington Post	More antiwar	Same	Same	Varies

# **DATELINE EVERYWHERE?**

# How the Web may make us vulnerable to long-distance libel

onsider this scenario: You write for Widget Week, a small industry magazine that maintains its own Web site. In a recent issue you penned a devastating profile of the widget mogul Terry Tunsado that implied he rooked investors by mounting a bogus whisper campaign about a "revolutionary" new widget he was developing — just before dumping his stock at the top of the market. Now Tunsado, claiming you libeled him, is going to sue, but not in Pittsburgh where Widget Week is published, or in Dallas, headquarters of his widget empire, but in Tahiti, where he can be secure in both his newfound wealth and a tricky set of extradition laws. But, you protest, Widget Week's tiny circulation is mostly in a few industrial states. He can't haul you into court halfway around the world. That's crazy!

Maybe, but you still might want to check out a recent ruling in *Gutnick v. Dow Jones*. It's a libel action brought by an Australian real estate magnate who claims he was libeled by *Barron's*, Dow Jones's weekly financial magazine. Joseph Gutnick brought suit in his home province of Victoria, claiming that Victoria is where his reputation was damaged. Dow Jones (supported by a host of other media companies) moved to have the suit dismissed for lack of jurisdiction. After all, *Barron's* is a specialized publication covering

American securities markets that isn't even sold on newsstands in Australia. "I think three people there used to get it by mail," says Stuart Karle, Dow Jones's associate general counsel. But that didn't faze the Victoria province's high court, which ruled in December that Gutnick's case could proceed. The court reasoned that, though the print version of *Barron's* wasn't available locally, the story could be downloaded from Dow Jones's Web site, WSJ.com, so there were sufficient grounds for the company to be sued in Victoria.

The ruling in *Gutnick* has concerned media lawyers because they now entertain visions of their clients' being sued in courts from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe based on material posted on the Internet. And it isn't all lawyer paranoia either. Dow Jones is currently defending Internet libel suits in three countries. When Richard Perle recently threatened to sue Seymour Hersh for libel over a *New Yorker* profile, he went shopping for a lawyer in London, not in New York or Washington. (At press time, he hadn't filed.) More ominously, last year the reporter Andrew Meldrum was charged in Zimbabwe for a piece that appeared on the Internet site of Britain's *Guardian* newspaper. "There's no doubt these cases are galvanizing people to deal with the issue," says Robert O'Neil, a constitutional law professor at the University of Virginia

### LANGUAGE CORNER

### SOMEWHERE, THE BARD WEEPS

eadline about a no-longer-prominent athlete:
"O Denis, Denis! Wherefore art thou Denis?"
Comment on the fickle pop music world:

"Local DJ trends come and go (wherefore art thou, acid iazz?!"

Whimsy amid wicked weather:

"Wherefore art thou, Romeo? Home with his feet up by the fire, if the poor lad had any luck at all."

All those allusions to Shakespeare are fatally flawed, as "wherefore art" cuteness almost always is.

Juliet's plaintive "O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?" had nothing to do with her lover's location. "Wherefore" means "why" (in both senses — "how come?" and "for that reason.") Juliet was asking why the fates had made Romeo part of the Montague family, with which her Capulets were locked in a virulent feud. "'Tis but thy name that is my enemy," she sighs; if his name had been the Veronese equivalent of Joe Smith, the two of them could have lived happily ever after.

By and large, "wherefore" survives today only in fancy proclamations and petitions, in some legal documents, and in the expression "the whys and wherefores." Also in stagings of *H.M.S. Pinafore* ("Never Mind the Why and Wherefore") and, painfully often, in misaimed Shakespearean allusions.

- Evan Jenkins

A lot more about writing is in Language Corner at CJR's Web site, www.cir.org.

### TECHNOLOGY CORNER

## **GOOGLE NEWS**

http://news.google.com

s a news junkie. I used to spend my time scouring the various major news sites to find out what was going on. Now I simply bookmark Google News and revisit it throughout the day. Whether it's the war in Iraq or other breaking news, this is the best place to get up-to-the-minute reports from 4.500 sites around the world. For example, the day after NBC's David Bloom died in Iraq, the site had links to more than 760 stories from Business Week to the London Guardian to HiPakistan.com. This global perspective highlights how narrow and predictable some of the U.S. sites are. I use the "sort by date" option to trace how a story evolved over the past thirty days.

Stories are generated using Google's complex algorithms and, as the site says, "without human intervention." Among the factors it considers: where and how often the stories appear elsewhere on the Web. This lack of editors means that, occasionally, some of the story placements are not quite right. but I find that it's constantly improving. So when you are doing a Google search for a story, be sure to also visit the news section to get more timely results.

— Sreenath Sreenivasan Sreenivasan (sree@sree.net), who teaches new media at Columbia, offers his tips for journalists at SreeTips.com.

and director of the Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression. But most media lawyers agree that any sort of international agreement on Internet liability is years away, if one can be fashioned at all. "It's one of the few areas in our field that is still completely open, and nothing is certain," says George Freeman, assistant general counsel for *The New York Times*.

A central question is what it means to "publish" something in the Internet age. In *Gutnick*, Dow Jones drew a distinction between the active act of circulating newspapers and magazines, or broadcasting television and radio signals, and the passive act of placing material on a computer server, which readers retrieve by using a Web browser they control. The company also argued that it was unrealistic and unjust to make Web publishers subject to the laws of any country where their material might be downloaded. Logically, the company argued, publishers should be bound by the laws of the jurisdiction where their servers are located.

The Australian court rejected both arguments, finding that they unfairly favored the publisher at the expense of plaintiffs. Underlying the court's opinion was wariness about America's First Amendment protections. The court noted that since the vast number of servers are in the U.S., Dow Jones's reasoning would essentially make American libel law the world standard for the Internet — something the court did not view with approval. "Publishers in the United States are well aware that few, if any, other jurisdictions in the world observe the approach to the vindication

of reputation adopted by the law in that country," one justice wrote.

As if to prove the Aussies right, just three days after the decision in *Gutnick*, a U.S. appeals court in Virginia handed down its own landmark ruling on Internet libel law. *Young* v. *New Haven Advocate* involved a suit brought by a Virginia prison warden against two Connecticut newspapers over articles detailing the treatment of Connecticut prisoners lodged in Virginia jails. The warden argued that although the papers' connection with Virginia was minimal, the availability of the articles on the Internet made them subject to suit in the state. In dismissing the warden's claim, the court found that the act of placing information on the Internet was not sufficient by itself to subject the papers to personal jurisdiction in each state in which the information was accessed. The court noted that since the papers did not circulate their editions in Virginia they did not "manifest intent" of doing business there.

Eventually, the *Young* and *Gutnick* cases may intersect. If outraged widget moguls want to enforce foreign libel judgments in America, they must first show that the decision doesn't offend U.S. notions of due process. *Young* and other recent cases make clear that American courts won't sanction such judgments if jurisdiction is based solely on Internet postings. So, Tahiti may be out for now. You can unpack the sunscreen.

— Douglas McCollam

McCollam is the Washington correspondent for The American Lawyer.

# **CIR CURRENTS**

# **ROLE MODEL: SARAH McCLENDON**

"We're just going to have to push our way in"



er booming voice — shouting "Mr. President! Mr. President!" — is a sound White House reporters who worked with Sarah McClendon over the fifty-seven years she was there are unlikely to forget. What will also be remembered is how, with every question, she embodied the very idea of a free press in a democracy. When a Texas battle-ax in comfortable shoes, armed only with her personality and a press pass, can shout down presidents on behalf of her readers, something is right. McClendon never forgot whom she was working for.

Nor did many of the young women she trained as interns. I was one of them. I remember her shaking her finger in my face, and barking in her East Texas drawl, "Don't be afraid to ask the president a question. It's his job to answer your questions, and your *responsibility* to ask them." The citizens, she would say, including veterans, minorities, welfare mothers, and children, have a right to know what their government is doing.

Back in 1981 I was a Georgetown University senior struggling to keep up with a seventy-one-year-old McClendon, who raced around town in a broken-down Toyota and never missed a news event or a cocktail party where she could work her sources. She was the only full-time employee in her one-person news bureau, McClendon News Service. Sarah often worked past midnight pounding out stories that were syndicated to newspapers across the country. She wrote stories about real people struggling with real issues and problems, from veterans' and women's rights to racism and unemployment. She often got results.

For me, this was a kind of journalistic boot camp. A typical day began with a phone call from the boss at 6:30 A.M. with marching orders. Basically, I was to cover nearly every news event in town, from a briefing in an obscure office of the Agriculture Department to a presidential press conference. Long before mentors were in fashion, McClendon fashioned herself as mine. "Women can make a difference and you must use your education to be a voice for the

little people," she used to say. "The men don't want us in here, so we're just going to have to push our way in."

When she was five, Sarah's mother would take her to women's suffrage rallies; she taught her daughter, the voungest of nine children, to stand up on the kitchen table and belt out suffragette speeches. The family was poor, but one of Sarah's sisters scraped together the tuition for Sarah to attend Tyler Junior College. She went on to get a journalism degree from the University of Missouri. Sarah married and joined the Women's Army Corps, serving as a public relations lieutenant during World War II. Her husband abandoned his pregnant wife, and she was honorably discharged when her daughter, Sally, was born. McClendon then headed to Washington as a single mother, and in 1946, she started the McClendon News Service. She often took her daughter to work -

at the White House, the capitol, even to political conventions.

I recall Sarah saying she was shy when she covered her first president, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, but soon she realized she had to shout questions to be heard. The press corps was nearly all male, and some colleagues didn't take her seriously. But that didn't stop her. McClendon broke new ground at many press conferences; in 1974 she asked President Nixon a question the mainstream press was ignoring about delays in processing tuition checks for Vietnam veterans. The president fixed the problem immediately and publicly thanked Sarah.

I am a student again now, but when I was teaching journalism at Columbia I honored Sarah by starting every class I taught with a few McClendon principles, in hopes that my students would come to believe that they wouldn't have to be part of the pack, that they could ask questions that might be unpopular, or unsexy, or, good heavens, embarrassing to the administration. I recall one student who said she couldn't get her idea across in an all-male editorial board meeting. It was Sarah's voice I heard inside of me telling this frightened young woman to fight for her story.

At ninety-two, McClendon was still working on her weekly column in a nursing home just weeks before she died, in January. Her tenacity, commitment to her readers, and fearlessness inspired me to become a journalist and, I expect, other women as well. Women journalists know they can make a difference, and we're a chorus now. When I read Jill Abramson or watch Andrea Mitchell or Christiane Amanpour, or take in the solid journalism of any number of less famous but equally dedicated women, I think of Sarah McClendon shouting to be heard.

- Roberta Oster Sachs

Roberta Oster Sachs, a former news producer at Nightline and elsewhere, is pursuing a master's degree in public administration at the Kennedy School at Harvard.

The Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism

# Let's Do It Better!

# Workshops on Journalism, Race and Ethnicity

# SALUTES ITS 2003 HONOREES

### **Print Honorees:**

### The Paul Tobenkin Memorial Award:

Dennis Hetzel and The York Daily Record staff for courage and tenacity in the coverage over 2 years of the investigation, trial and community impact of the 32-year old hate crime murder of Lillie Belle Allen.

### Leadership Award:

Sandy Close, director of the New California Ethnic Media Association and Pacific News Service in recognition of her life-long commitment to telling the full story of America's many cultures.

Anne Hull, The Washington Post, for her portfolio of work, including her series, "Rim of the New World."

Sonia Nazario, The Los Angeles Times, for her series "Enrique's Journey."

Reporter Connie Schultz and photographer Eustacio Humphrey, The Plain Dealer in Cleveland, for "The Burden of Innocence"

### Honorable Mention:

Eileen Lerhnert and The Jackson Citizen Patriot for "Confronting Racism."

### For Column Writing:

Juan Gonzalez of The New York Daily News Derrick Jackson of The Boston Globe Jodi Rave Lee of Lee Enterprises Leonard Pitts of The Miami Herald.



### **Broadcast Honorees**

### Lifetime Achievement Award:

The Today Show, NBC News. Producers Robin Sindler and John O'Rourke for a portfolio of work, including "Pied Piper of Smart," "Lanier Phillips Gift," and "A Test of Love".

### Leadership Awards:

Ann Curry, The Today Show news anchor and correspondent, for reporting on "A Test of Love," and in recognition for her overall leadership in inclusive and vital story telling.

KIRO-TV 7 Eyewitness News, Seattle, for "The Hidden Face of Racism" Special recognition to producer and writer Ben Saboonchian.

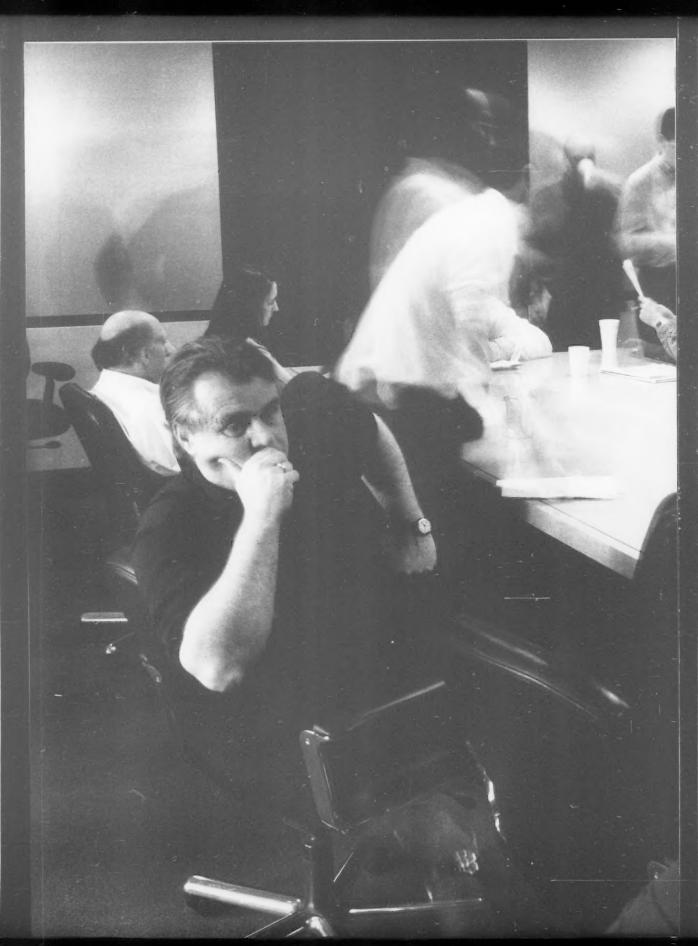
KPBS-TV, San Diego, for "Culture of Hate: Who Are We?" Lee Harvey, independent producer, and Alisa Joyce Barba, NPR Western Bureau chief for their thoughtful hour-long examination of White Power racism in Lakeside, CA, after the murder of a Mexican worker.

Tong Li, China, Beijing TV, for "Yige AIDS Bingdu Ganranzhe" or "A Man with HIV," a riveting portrait on the devastating emotional impact the disease has on one of the country's earliest known victims.

POV, Whitney Dow and Marco Williams, PBS for "TwoTowns of Jaspers," a documentary detailing the impact of the killing of James Byrd on the African-American and White residents of Jasper, Texas.

WHYY-TV and Linda Wright Moore for "Latina Salud: Body, Mind & Spirit," a year-long initiative exploring the cultural barriers to effective health care affecting Latinas in the Philadelphia region.

The Let's Do It Better! competition and workshops is a Ford Foundation sponsored project to improve the quality of reporting on race and ethnicity. Entry deadline for the annual competition is November 15, 2003. The honored works are the focus of a three-day workshop in June for broadcast news managers and newspaper news executives. For more information contact Arlene Morgan, project director, at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, at am494@columbia.edu or 212-854-5377 or consult www.jrn.columbia.edu/events/race/.



# THE AMERICAN NEWSROOM

*Time* magazine at closing New York City Friday, March 21, 2003 10:40 P.M.

PHOTO BY SEAN HEMMERLE

# NOSTAN THE

# A BIG PLAN TO STAY SMALL



BY LIZ COX

THE QUESTION hanging in the air around the conference table at *The Anniston Star*'s 4:30 p.m. story meeting on this particular Wednesday is: Bibles or brothels? That is, executive editor Troy Turner wants to know which story his senior staff thinks is likely to be of more interest to the newspaper's 26,173 readers, and therefore merits the fifth slot in the following day's page-one lineup: that Alabama Governor Bob Riley, with some controversy, has begun holding weekly Biblestudy sessions in his Montgomery office, or that the state of Nevada might begin taxing prostitutes? Because *think reader* is one of the guiding precepts at the family-owned *Star*, and one to which Turner refers frequently in some variation or another when talking or writing about the paper. *Think reader*, and *think big*.

The *Star* is a small daily, but its publisher, sixty-eight-year-old H. Brandt ("Brandy") Ayers, has thought big since he and his sister, Elise Ayers Sanguinetti, took ownership of the paper upon their mother's death nearly thirty years ago. Ayers's father founded *The Anniston Star* in 1912 in this hilly tract of northeastern Alabama, roughly halfway between Birmingham and Atlanta, and his grandfather ran the *Star*'s forerunner for several years around the turn of the twentieth century. Over time, Anniston's only daily made a name for itself as what Ayers and several staff members call a "crusading" paper, in large part from its pro-civil rights stance during the 1960s — a lonely position at that time in this area.

These days, thinking big often means looking well beyond the thirty-two square miles that make up Anniston proper. Star reporters have been dispatched in recent years to Mexico, Cuba, Brazil, and Russia to write what Turner calls "globallocal stories" — stories from afar that have some specific local import. While the Star, like many small papers, has relied on wire copy for news from Iraq, a reporter is poised to accompany to Iraq an Anniston-based unit of Army reservists trained in handling chemical weapons, should the unit's services ever actually be needed. International reporting is an

unusual priority for a paper of this size, and one that earned the Star the Overseas Press Club Award in 2001, and the Associated Press Managing Editors' International Perspective Award in 2002. In the late afternoon of this Wednesday, Turner brings two staff members - Kevin Qualls, one of the Star's four photographers, and J. Wes Yoder, a rookie reporter — to his office to discuss their trip to Durban, South Africa, the following week. The plan is to report on Habitat for Humanity's Jimmy Carter Work Project, which built houses in Durban last year and will build in Anniston in June. "We want to let Anniston residents know what kind of results they might expect here," Turner says. He also hopes to report on HIV and AIDS while in South Africa, what he calls "another huge global-local issue." Anthony Cook, a former Star metro editor now at The Birmingham News, says the Star aims to show readers "why things are happening on the other side of the world," and why they matter here "on Quintard Avenue and Noble Street.'

Here off Quintard, north on Highway 21, and up a freshly paved blue-black macadam driveway, on 78,000 square feet of what used to be the U.S. Army's Fort McClellan, sits the Star's new headquarters. Ayers bought this land from the Army in 2001 (the fort closed in 1999), and then poured \$16 million into this modern, metal-roofed construction that houses the Star's editorial and business operations, and the executive offices of the paper's parent company, Consolidated Publishing Company (of which Ayers is chairman). There are two dailies and four weeklies in the Consolidated stable — the Star is the largest by circulation and reputation — and all six papers are printed here. Three miles separate this place and the former Star building, just west of the train tracks, where the staff worked for four decades, though the true distance is best measured in light. Windows are abundant in the new structure, including eight skylights. Not so at the old place, where, Ayers says, it was as if someone "put you in a box for forty-two years and put the lid on."

The airy new building is one part of Brandy Ayers's big strategy to stay small. In December Ayers announced plans to establish a nonprofit foundation to ensure that the *Star* and its sister

lish a nonprofit foundation to ensure that the *Star* and its sister papers remain independently owned in perpetuity — or in Ayers's words, to "keep our newspapers from becoming just an undistinguished link in a long corporate chain." Under a complicated formula, the foundation will eventually hold Ayers's — and his seventy-nine-year-old sister's — Consolidated stock. (A portion of the stock will



first go to Ayers's thirty-three-year-old daughter, Margaret — who is the only Ayers heir — and then to the foundation upon her death.) The stock will support the newly formed Ayers Family Institute for Community Journalism, which will offer a graduate program in community journalism in partnership with the University of Alabama. Chris Waddle, the director of the Institute and the *Star*'s vice president of news, describes the effort as "the coming together of a newspaper and a university to form an honors graduate program in the middle of a newsroom, something like a teaching hospital."

Waddle hopes the Knight Foundation, which gave the institute a \$50,000 planning grant, will fund the foundation until it inherits the Consolidated stock. In the meantime, three task forces are at work planning the details of the institute's curriculum, infrastructure, and student-recruitment process. Waddle anticipates welcoming the program's first class — of a dozen or so students — in the fall of 2004. The mission, Ayers says, is to diminish the distance between newspapers and the neighborhoods they cover.

ASSORTED framed certificates and plaques adorn a stretch of the Star newsroom's interior south wall, including six 2002 Alabama Press Association Better Newspaper Awards, ranging from Best Economic Coverage to Best Sports. In 1997 Time magazine called The Anniston Star one of the "best papers you've never heard of." Turner boasts in a job advertisement for a new metro editor: "Our circulation is less than 30,000, but our reputation is that of a giant."

One staff member wonders aloud why the Star has this reputation, which another calls "a bit larger than life," and which Ayers says "does not bear close examination," although he says it in a way that makes clear that he mostly believes just the opposite. He ascribes the Star's standing in the newspaper world to "a nostalgia for the independently owned paper that's also independent in its own community," a paper that "loves and spanks." The Star is one of a dwindling number of locally owned, nonchain daily newspapers in the country, and one of a handful in Alabama. Jason Landers, the Star's chemical-weapons reporter, has worked for two comparably sized papers and deems the Star the best, by far. "The biggest difference - and you can't imagine how big a difference this is — is that at other papers, it seems they're mostly interested in making their paper look good to sell to a bigger company," he says. The priorities at the Star, Landers The mission for the Ayers Family Institute, Brandy Ayers says, is to diminish the distance between newspapers and the neighborhoods they cover.

says, are to remain independently owned and "to do good journalism."

Independent owners, of course, can be as high- or low-minded as any chain, and just as acquisitive. This does not seem to be the case in Anniston. Ayers says he aims for a 10 percent profit margin, less than half of what many publishers target, and that he does not consistently reach that goal. The



\$16-million new facility has something to do with missing that mark. Moreover, the *Star* has a full-time editorial staff of thirty-eight, a headcount that exceeds by almost 50 percent the rough industry standard of one newsroom employee for every one thousand readers. The *Star* is one of the smallest dailies in Alabama to have a correspondent stationed in Montgomery, the state capital. Also unusual for a paper the *Star*'s

size, Landers says, is its "commitment to go after a story no matter where it's at"; he recently pitched a piece for which he needed to travel to Portland, Oregon. "Two weeks later I was on a plane."

Other Star reporters confirm that they are given a long leash. And, they point out, they are digging for stories in exceptionally story-rich terrain, terrain that has attracted big-name media to Anniston to report on the issues the Star covers day in and day out. Monsanto produced polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) at a plant in western Anniston from 1929 until 1971, and the chemicals are present in Anniston's soil, water, and the bodies of some of its residents. Multiple lawsuits are pending. 60 Minutes came to Anniston last fall and declared it "America's most toxic town" — old news to the Star and its readers. Seven percent of the country's aging cold war chemical weapons are stored at the Anniston Army Depot, awaiting potential incineration, and residents are bitterly divided over how to dispose of them. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation came to Anniston in February to report on the community's preparedness for an accident or a terrorist strike at the depot. Landers, an Alabama native, has been writing about these issues for the year and a half that he has been on the chemical-weapons beat, which has formally existed at the Star for more than a decade, and unofficially since the early 1980s.

When Fort McClellan closed in 1999, thousands of civilian

# Who

fought for a quality education for their children?

# Who

went to jail in order to ride the public buses?

# Who

changed the law to gain access to the vote?

# Who

has created more change in America than any other group in the last 2 decades?

People with disabilities -54 million of us. Changing the face of America.



Putting a face on the people who are changing the face of America.

Resources for reporters and editors.

accessiblesociety.org

and military jobs disappeared, and Anniston continues to struggle economically. In 2002 Forbes magazine ranked Anniston last in business and career opportunities of all ninety-six U.S. metropolitan areas with populations below 177,000 (Anniston's population is 24,296 in a county of 111,338). Local and state economic problems have been fodder for the Star's editorial page — as well as its front and business pages - for years. Among existing steady jobs in Anniston are those at the Union Foundry, which was one target of a recent five-part New York Times series about dangerous workplace conditions. Seventeen days before the Times series ran, the Star reported on safety and environmental issues at Union Foundry, over two days, on page one. Sara Clemence, twentyeight, is the Star's environmental writer and one of the reporters who covered the Union Foundry story. This is Clemence's first staff newspaper job, which she started less than a year ago. "Sometimes it scares the hell out of me that I'm the one on the ground covering this stuff," says Clemence, who has one of the paper's most controversial beats, reporting on Monsanto (and now its spin-off, Solutia), PCBs, and the related lawsuits. Twentythree-year-old J. Wes Yoder, who co-wrote the Union Foundry pieces, graduated from Auburn University in 2001, and has been with the Star since September.

Clemence and Yoder are not the only relative novices in the newsroom; six of the Star's thirteen reporters have been there for a year or less, and several have limited previous experience. Like many small-town newspapers, the Star is something of a training ground, what Turner calls a "learning newspaper." Some reporters qualify that, calling it a "learning-by-doing newspaper," and noting they do not get as much coaching as they would like. Either way, it is a distinction, says the former metro editor Anthony Cook, that is the Star's blessing and curse. Turner notes that "rookies take a little longer to develop, and meanwhile their work is showing up in our paper every day." On the upside, the Star gets a steady influx of idealistic reporters, eager for experience, and the paper's reputation draws bright recent graduates (who are typically paid about \$23,000 a year). "I would love to see the type of newspaper they'd be turning out if the same group of people were here five years from now," says Cook, who concedes that the chances of the Star's retaining this reporting staff for that long are "slim to none." As Time wrote in 1997, the Star "develops reporters who make reputations elsewhere" - people like The New York Times's Rick Bragg, a native of nearby Possum Trot, Alabama, and a Star reporter in the 1980s, and Seth Lipsky, the editor of the year-old daily, *The New York Sun*, who covered politics for the *Star* in the late sixties.

# THE ANNISTON Star's

mentary department, three men strong, is quarantined behind glass in the southwest corner of the newsroom. Experience reigns here. Bruce Lowery has worked for the Star for fifteen years. John Fleming joined the paper in 1998, after several years of reporting for news wires in Africa. Harvey H. Jackson is a history professor at nearby Jacksonville State University and has written for the Star since the early 1990s. Together, they have criticized President George W. Bush's unilateral approach to the Iraq situation, opposed the death penalty, and come out in favor of incinerating the chemical weapons stored at the Anniston Army Depot — all controversial stances in this neck of the woods, and all characteristic of Ayers's self-described "love 'em and whup 'em" approach to journalism.

Not every Star reader appreciates this approach, which has earned the paper the nicknames The Red Star and The Scar. Here, too, there is a certain distance between the paper and some of its readers. Last year, one reader wrote a letter to the editor saying that the Star is out "to destroy our city by only printing onesided, far-left biased political reporting," and that the paper "bites the hand that feeds it." Another reader recently wrote to cancel her twenty-five-year subscription because of an editorial that called a war protestor "thoughtful and courageous." One Anniston resident, an employee at the Waffle House on Quintard Avenue, had this to say when asked if she reads the Star. "Just the horoscopes. Besides that, it's too much bad news."

On a Thursday in late February, the news in The Anniston Star is decidedly mixed. Both the University of Alabama and the Auburn University men's basketball teams lost key NCAA games the previous night. A French cement company has announced plans to build a plant in western Anniston, which will bring a dozen new jobs to the city. And in the end, it is hard to say which got better billing — the Good Book or Nevada's prostitute tax. An Associated Press version of the Bible studies story shares space on page one with a Knight Ridder story on Iraq and three staff-bylined pieces (a typical Star page-one mix). The brothel-tax story appears on page 8C. But it is teased in bold on the top-left corner of 1A -SIN CASH - beneath The Anniston Star's tagline: "a home-owned newspaper."

Liz Cox is an assistant editor at CJR.





# The New York Times Company Salutes the Winners of the 2003 Pulitzer Prize from The New York Times and The Boston Globe

### CLIFFORD J. LEVY, The New York Times, for Investigative Reporting



It is hard to imagine that 15,000 mentally ill people could live in state-regulated facilities yet be virtually invisible to state officials, that for more than two decades these residents could be subject to such appalling conditions, that

nearly 1,000 of them could have died in recent years without anyone asking how or why.

Clifford J. Levy's series of three articles on the subject exposed the shameful and sometimes deadly practices of these adult homes and shook New York State's government into action. Mr. Levy spent a year preparing these sweeping articles, canvassing neighborhoods where the homes were located, interviewing hundreds of workers, residents and family members, uncovering more than 5,000 pages of internal state documents.

The series revealed how adult homes had become "psychiatric flophouses," profiting owners and doctors, ignored by officials. It resulted in the state government's major investigation of adult home operators and lawsuit against them, and in January 2003, Gov. George E. Pataki announced an \$80 million plan to overhaul the adult-home system, even in the face of the worst budget crisis in memory.

# THE BOSTON GLOBE, for Public Service

On January 6, 2002, The Boston Globe published the first of hundreds of articles about clergy sex abuse in the Catholic Church — and in the process touched off what is perhaps the biggest scandal in the history of American religion.

It began with a seemingly routine court filing — in which Cardinal Bernard F. Law made a startling admission. He acknowledged having received a warning that the Rev. John J. Geoghan had molested children before the cardinal reassigned the priest to a job as parochial vicar at St. Julia's Catholic Church in Weston, Mass. The Globe decided to investigate whether the Geoghan case represented a pattern within the Boston Archdiocese.

The newspaper's subsequent reports led to a new movement among the laity, a Massachusetts law requiring clergymen to report sexual abuse, grand jury investigations and tough scrutiny of the church by law enforcement, a revolt among Boston priests against their leadership, an emergency meeting of U.S. cardinals at the Vatican, a national child protection policy in the Catholic Church, and ultimately the resignation of Cardinal Law, once the nation's most influential Catholic prelate. By year's end, the scandal had forced the removal of 450 accused priests nationwide.

The newspaper group of The New York Times Company comprises The New York Times, The Boston Globe, the International Herald Tribune and 16 other newspapers. All of these papers share one defining trait: an unwavering dedication to journalistic excellence. We congratulate the winners of this year's Pulitzer Prizes, and we thank all the men and women who embrace this guiding mission every day.



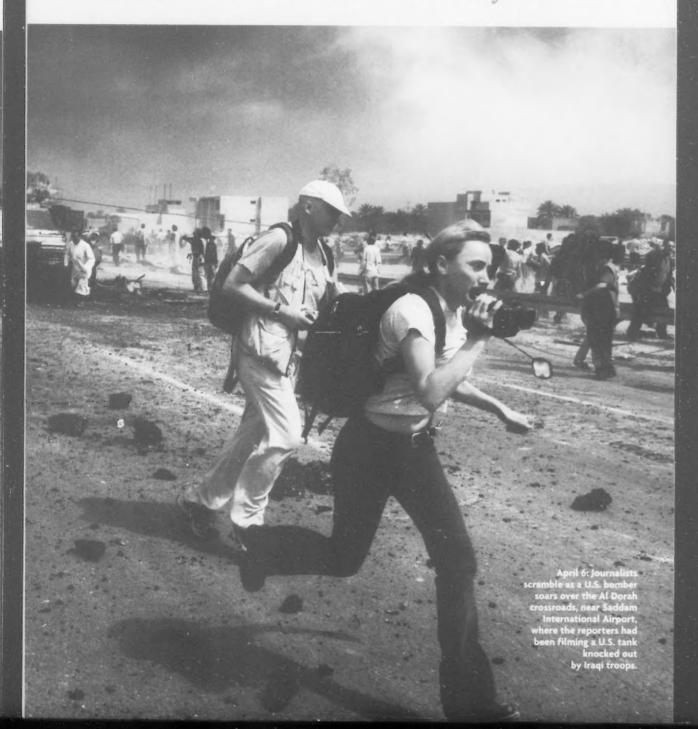
# WAR STOR

fficially, it's over: America won. How did the truth fare? Did it come out a winner as well at the hands of American journalism? In the following pages, CJR examines the performance of the nation's press in the most intensively covered conflict in the history of warfare. The package opens, fittingly, we believe, with assistant editor Adeel Hassan's "Why We Risk All" (page 23), an exploration of the courage and commitment - and the motives - of the journalists from all over the world who so willingly serve in war zones, and especially of the sixteen who died in Iraq. On page 26, Terence Smith, media correspondent for PBS's NewsHour, begins to answer some of the hard questions raised by the Pentagon's unprecedented experiment in embedding reporters with the troops — and poses still harder questions that news organizations have yet to confront. That experiment, of course, provided TV news with unmatched access; did the networks make the most of it? Veteran TV newsman Paul Friedman offers an assessment (page 29). Next, "Dispatches" (page 32) presents the firsthand experiences of nine reporters at the front, some who were embedded, others who roamed free, and each in his own, unique voice: Gordon Dillow of The Orange County Register; Michael Massing of CJR and the Committee to Protect Journalists; John Donvan of ABC News; Anthony Shadid of The Washington Post; Borzou Daragahi, a free lance; Chuck Stevenson of CBS's 48 Hours; John Laurence for Esquire and others; Bob Arnot of NBC; and John Burnett of NPR. This magazine's editors and, we think, its readers, will not soon forget the reality that these dispatches capture, or the insights they afford. Equally compelling is the homefront, inside-the-newsroom story surrounding the imprisonment of four journalists, including two from Newsday: on page 48, Dele Olojede, the paper's foreign editor, recounts the dramatic day-by-day developments in the efforts to get them out, from the first suspicious sounds of silence from Baghdad to the joyful cries of colleagues at the news of their eventual release. Other sounds — the not-such-easy-listening ones composed especially as an accompaniment to TV war news — caught the attentive ears of Nicholas Engstrom. His "Soundtrack for War" appears on page 45. Meanwhile, turning to the prelude, John R. MacArthur (Voices, page 62) takes a hard look at the ready acceptance by journalists of the so-called evidence that justified the march to Iraq in the first place. •



# IES

# How We Performed On the New Battlefield



# Recognition for writing that has made a difference



# Congratulations to The Washington Post's 2003 Pulitzer Prize winners

International Reporting—Mary Jordan and Kevin Sullivan for daring coverage of conditions in Mexico's criminal justice system.

Commentary—Colbert I. King for columns that speak to people in power with veracity and wisdom.

Criticism—Stephen Hunter

for authoritative film criticism that is both intellectually rewarding
and a pleasure to read.

# Congratulations also to

Post reporter **Anne Hull**—Finalist, National Reporting for her series on the lives of recent immigrants to America.

Post reporter **Rick Atkinson**—Winner, History for his book, written while on leave "An Army at Dawn: The War in North Africa, 1942-1943."

The Washington Post



# WHY JOURNALISTS RISK ALL

BY ADEEL HASSAN

hris Hedges was sprinting down a road in the Gaza Strip, just ahead of some young Palestinians carrying Molotov cocktails whom he had been interviewing, dodging bullets fired by Israeli soldiers, when he concluded that he could no longer be a war correspondent. It was at this moment, in the fall of 2000, after twenty years of being shot at, shelled, bombed, ambushed, and taken prisoner, that Hedges, a reporter for The New York Times, made "a very conscious decision to stop." Others, like Ian Stewart, an AP reporter who was shot in the head in 1999 in Sierra Leone, stopped when they were wounded. The sixteen journalists featured on the next two pages didn't get to make that decision. They lost their lives in Iraq. Which raises the question: If physical and emotional injuries and death

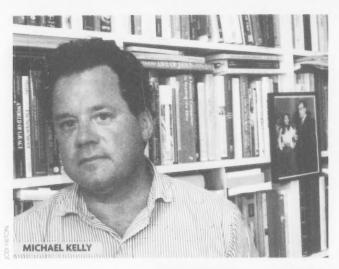
can end such careers, then what starts them? Why do some journalists risk all?

Perhaps the main motive is simple: "I've been a storyteller my whole life and war is a big story," says John Laurence, who covered the Iraq conflict primarily for *Esquire* and has covered sixteen wars, beginning with Vietnam. But there are other reasons, including the need to make a mark. Laurence saw that in the two other reporters he traveled with in Iraq. One was on her first big story for a Latin-American newspaper. The other was a photographer "who came to try and prove himself."

Stewart, for one, did not set out to become a war correspondent when he graduated from journalism school in 1991. He reported from more than forty countries and covered the wars in West Africa in the late 1990s because "it was the hottest story then." Shortly after the coup in Sierra

Leone, he and Myles Tierney, an AP Television News producer, were ambushed by rebels in their car. Tierney died instantly; Stewart was given a 20 percent chance of living. Today, his left arm is paralyzed. Stewart says that many war reporters, including himself, are in denial about the danger. "It happens," he says, "but it was never going to happen to you."

Stewart's uncle, Brian Stewart, one of Canada's most accomplished foreign correspondents, helped instill in him the belief that journalists are at the front line of history. Michael Kelly, the late editor of The Atlantic Monthly and columnist for The Washington Post, also was drawn to war, at least in part, as a matter of conviction. "He was an advocate of this war," says John Fox Sullivan, publisher of the Atlantic. "So he really felt a responsibility to cover it." Kelly was killed when the Humvee in which he was riding came



KELLY, 46, was covering the war for *The Atlantic* on April 3. He leaves his wife, Madelyn, and two sons.

PODESTÁ, 52, an Argentine TV correspondent, was killed on April 14 in a car accident between Amman and Baghdad.

CABRERA, 28, was traveling with her colleague Podestá. She died on April 15.





under enemy fire and swerved into a canal. Lieutenant Colonel Rock Marcone told the *National Journal*: "Mike begged me to get him up front for the assault on the airfield, and I finally agreed. That was what Michael wanted to do. He was going to get his story."

Kelly must have understood something of what Hedges gets at in his new book, War Is A Force That Gives Us Meaning, when he explains that reporters get addicted to the emotional intensity. "There's a close-knit fraternity of war correspondents," Hedges says. "Courage is very highly looked upon. You earn your way into it."

Not all war reporters are looking to be part of this mostly male fraternity. Judith Matloff describes herself as "accidental conflict reporter." In the early 1980s, Matloff was doing research in Mexico and began writing free-lance pieces. She joined Reuters, and eventually covered forty-seven countries, half of which were in conflict, as Africa bureau chief for *The Christian Science Monitor*. "People who are in this for the thrill, that's the wrong motivation," she says. "War is a huge part of the human experience." To cover it.

she says, "You have to have a big heart, moral vision, and never lose sight of your humanity."

But is it worth it, after all? "After 9/11, everyone in the newsroom was fighting to go to Afghanistan," says Maria Ramirez, twenty-five, a contributor to El Mundo, Spain's second largest daily. But then one El Mundo reporter was killed in Afghanistan, another in Israel, and later a third in Iraq, and suddenly there were no more volunteers. "There is no story worth a life," she says.

Yet the world does need to see and understand its armed conflicts. After covering World War II, the CBS correspondent Eric Sevareid told his radio listeners, "The war must be seen to be believed, but it must be lived to be understood." John Laurence agrees. "If no one was risking their lives for this war, then the public wouldn't be informed," he says. "If we're not willing to do that, then the idea of a free press has quite a defect, and democracy would really cease to exist. There have to be some risks worth dying for. Being a good reporter is one of them."

Adeel Hassan is an assistant editor at CIR.



GOLESTAN, 52, an Iranian free-lance cameraman on assignment for the BBC, was killed in northern Iraq on April 3 after stepping on a land mine. He was also a well-known still photographer. He leaves a wife and son.



N, PAUL KOPCZYNSK, EFE/TELECINO

PROTSYUK, 35, a cameraman for Reuters, died after a U.S. tank fired a shell at the Palestine Hotel in Baghdad on April 8, where most journalists in the city were based. The shell hit a hotel balcony where several journalists were monitoring a battle on the other side of the nearby Tigris River. He had worked for Reuters since 1993, covering conflicts in Bosnia, Kosovo, Chechnya, and Afghanistan. He leaves a wife and son.



COUSO, 37, a cameraman for the Spanish television station Telecinco, also died in the Palestine Hotel incident. Couso was married and had two children.





AYYOUB, 35, a Jordanian journalist with al-Jazeera, was killed on April 8 when a U.S. missile struck the station's Baghdad headquarters, a twostory house in a residential area. He leaves a wife and one-year-old daughter.



**JULIO PARRADO** 

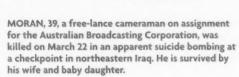


PAUL MORAN

PARRADO, 32, a correspondent for the Spanish daily El Mundo, died on April 7 in an Iragi missile attack while accompanying the U.S. Army's Third Infantry Division south of Baghdad.



LLOYD, 50, a veteran war correspondent with Britain's ITV News. was confirmed dead on March 23. He had disappeared the previous day after coming under fire while driving to the southern Iraqi city of Basra. Two other journalists (not pictured) disappeared with Lloyd: cameraman FRED NERAC and translator HUSSEIN OSMAN. They are still missing. Lloyd is survived by his wife, daughter, and son.





CHRISTIAN LIEBIG

LIEBIG, 35, a reporter for the German weekly magazine Focus, died on April 7 in an Iraqi missile attack while accompanying the Third Infantry Division.



ELIZABETH

NEUFFER, 46, veteran foreign correspondent and U.N. Bureau Chief for The Boston Globe, who served in Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Rwanda, was killed along with her translator on May 9 in a car accident near the town of Samarra. Neuffer had been returning to Baghdad from Tikrit, where she had spent the night working on a story. Waleed Khalifa Hassan Al-Dulaimi, 31 (not pictured), a U.N. employee who took a temporary job as a translator for the Globe, leaves a wife, who is eight months pregnant with twins.

KAMARAN MUHAMED, 25 (not pictured), a **Kurdish translator** working for the BBC, was killed on April 6 in northern Iraq in a "friendly fire" incident after a U.S. warplane dropped a bomb on a convoy of Americans and Kurds.



RADO, 48, a correspondent with Britain's Channel 4 News, was found dead outside his hotel in Sulaimaniya, in northern Iraq, on March 30. There was speculation that he might have fallen off the roof. He leaves his wife, Dessa, and his two sons.

# THE REAL-TIME WAR

# HARD LESSONS

BY TERENCE SMITH

t was April 9th, the day Baghdad fell to U.S. troops. Martin Savidge and his CNN crew were riding in an armored column approaching the city from the southeast. In the center of the city, a worldwide television audience was watching as exhilarated Iraqis and U.S. soldiers toppled the giant statue of Saddam Hussein.

Savidge, and the marines, had been listening to cheers from Iraqi residents lining the road into the city until suddenly, as they passed the campus of Baghdad University, they came under small-arms fire. "We're way beyond sniper fire," he said via videophone to Paula Zahn back in the studio in New York. "This is an all-out engagement here, this is warfare," he continued in his cool, seemingly unruffled baritone over grainy but incredibly dramatic pictures of the action. "That sounds like more tank fire or more missile fire," he said, his breath coming a little more quickly now. "We're being warned hang on — about small-arms fire coming at our position. As you can hear, this is a far cry from the jubilant crowds we left — it's just hard to imagine two blocks away!"

Savidge's riveting account was vintage war reporting, delivered firsthand in first person in real time to an audience that listened as the marines took fire, returned it tenfold, and after forty-

five minutes of fierce fighting subdued one of the last pockets of resisting Iraqi fighters.

It was a perfect example of how the Pentagon's bold experiment with embedded reporters was supposed to work and how, in some cases, it did work

Embedding — assigning 700-plus U.S. and foreign reporters to train, travel, and share danger and hardships with American military units - was the most innovative aspect of the coverage of the second gulf war. It made possible a kind of intimate, immediate, absorbing, almost addictive coverage, the likes of which we have not seen before. In the twenty-one days between the first air strike on Baghdad and the collapse of Saddam's regime, a new standard was set for war reporting. It is impossible to imagine a future U.S. military campaign without reporters embedded in frontline units, without instant transmission from the battlefield, without "tank cams," "lipstick cams," satellite phones, grainy-green night-vision cameras, and all the high-tech paraphernalia that brought war in Iraq directly into our living rooms and collective consciousness. There is no going back.

That does not mean the coverage was flawless. Far from it. As the media correspondent for *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*, I watched, listened to, and read the coverage, preparing segments for the broadcast and frequently talking with correspondents, embedded and

otherwise, throughout the theater. On balance, I thought it was remarkable work: courageous, honest, and largely accurate. But some important questions need to be asked about the way the war was reported. For example:

Did the media get it right, or at least more right than wrong?

Mistakes were made, as the White House likes to say, especially in the excitement and chaos of the early going. The strategic southern city of Basra was reported taken on March 23, when in fact it took British troops another two weeks to subdue the resistance there. Scud missiles were said to be striking in Kuwait that same day, when in fact they were not. An entire Iraqi division was reported to have laid down its arms and surrendered, when in fact it had not. A fast-moving convoy of Republican Guards in 1,000 armored vehicles was repeatedly reported to be moving south from Baghdad on March 26 to confront U.S. forces, when in fact it was busy scattering under relentless U.S. air

On the positive side, there were occasions when the embedded media got the story straight, in contrast to the version of events offered by the briefers in the million-dollar press center in Doha, Qatar. When U.S. soldiers tragically killed women and children in a van that approached a checkpoint without stopping, for example, Centcom described an orderly, by-the-book process in which the sentries fired warning shots, then fired into the vehicle's engine, and finally fired on the passenger compartment when the van refused to stop, killing seven.

In the next day's Washington Post, William Branigin, who was embedded with the unit involved in the incident, described a far more chaotic situation, with the commander screaming in frustration into his radio because he thought the sentries failed to respond to his order to fire the required warning shots. Branigin quoted the commander as shouting, "You just [expletive] killed a family because you didn't fire a warning shot soon enough!" In all, ten civilians died, not seven, Branigin reported.

In another incident, Dexter Filkins of The New York Times was there to quote a sergeant's chilling explanation of why his unit shot and killed a woman who

Embeds, 'tank cams,' 'lipstick cams,' satellite phones, and grainy-green night-vision cameras brought war into our living rooms

# **BY THE NUMBERS**

# How Americans with Internet access got most of their news about war\*:

TV	87%
Newspapers	21%
Radio	22%
Internet	17%
*respondents allowed to	give two answers

# Where Americans who use the Internet got war news online:

U.S. TV network sites	32%
U.S. newspaper sites	29%
U.S. government sites	15%
Foreign news organization sites	10%
Alternative news sites	8%
Blogs	4%

# Appearance of "al-Jazeera" in the top fifty Lycos search terms:

DATE	RANK
Week ending Mar	rch 15 not in top 50
Week ending Mar	rch 22 40
Week ending Mar	rch 29 1
Week ending April	il 5 1
Week ending Apri	il 12 3
Week ending Apri	il 19 49

# Top three international news Web sites in numbers of U.S. visitors between March 19 and March 31:

WEB SITE	U.S. VISITORS
bbc.co.uk	577,608
aljazeera.net	169,697
guardian.co.uk	143,886

# Number of appearances by military analysts on television news shows between March 20 and April 21:

ABC	29
CBS	42
CNN	55
NBC, MSNBC	41
Fox News	47

6 Minimum number of phrases appearing in newspapers in March and April 2003 that describe Donald Rumsfeld and include the word "hard" (hard-nosed, hard-boiled, hard-liner, hard-to-parse, hard guy, hard man)

5 Number of days world was deprived of Peter Arnett's war reporting after he gave interview to Iraqi TV (from the last day his work ran on MSNBC/NBC to the day his first piece about the war ran in London's *Daily Mirror*)

8 Number of days world was deprived of Geraldo Rivera's war reporting after he drew a map in the sand (from his last day on-air with troops in Iraq to the day he reappeared on air for Fox, from Kuwait)

### SOURCES

Lexis Nexis; Pew Internet & American Life Project, Iraq war survey, March 20-25, 2003; Lycos; comScore Media Metrix; Department of Defense briefings transcripts; White House briefings transcripts; *Daily Mirror* 

was standing near some Iraqi soldiers.
"I'm sorry, but the chick was in the way," the sergeant said.

There is no substitute for up-close reporting like that. But at the same time, the embedding procedure poses obvious risks. There is a real danger of getting too close to your subject. It's a professionally treacherous" situation, Jim Dwyer of The New York Times said in an interview from the field. "You are sleeping next to people you are covering. Your survival is based on them." The examples of this were not generally egregious. There was no misreporting of facts, but rather an empathetic tone in a lot of the embedded reporting that was understandable, I suppose, but lacked the skeptical, hard edge it might

otherwise have had. Judith Miller of *The New York Times*, for example, was attacked by *Slate's* Jack Shafer and other media critics for her credulous coverage of MET-Alpha, the weapons inspection team to which she was attached. When the team interviewed an Iraqi scientist who said that the Hussein regime had destroyed its weapons of mass destruction days before the war began, Miller, who never interviewed the scientist herself, described it as a "silver bullet" in the search. Shafer and others accused her of functioning, effectively, as a spokeswoman for the unit.

The veteran war correspondent Chris Hedges wrote in *The Nation* that the embedding process induces reporters to perpetuate the myth of war as an ennobling exercise. "They depend on the military for everything, from food to a place to sleep. They look to the soldiers around them for protection. When they feel the fear of hostile fire, they identify and seek to protect those who protect them. They become part of the team. It is a natural reaction."

So the reviews on embedding are mixed and will be debated for some time. But overall, on the issue of accuracy and fairness, 1 would give the media a grade

Did the Big Picture emerge from the sodastraw views of the fighting provided by the embedded reporters?

It is generally true that the embedded reporters were able to describe only the narrow slice of the battlefield that they could see or hear. The *National Journal's* George Wilson described being embedded with a Marine artillery unit as akin to being the number-two dog in a sled dog team. "You saw an awful lot of the dog in front of you," he said, "and a little to the left and right."

More broadly, the television coverage provided by embedded reporters was often long on image and short on detail. You saw and heard some of the bangbang, but the larger narrative was often missing.

Newspaper coverage, by contrast, tended to be more comprehensive. Readers who followed the daily lead-all articles written by Patrick Tyler in The New York Times, and similar summary pieces in The Washington Post and Los Angeles Times, got a good picture of the overall progress of the war. They were aided immeasurably by the full-page maps that charted the troop movements, most of which were simpler and easier to comprehend than the hightech studio sand-tables favored by the corps of television generals. So the big picture, at least in terms of the fighting, was there to be had. Overall grade . . .

# Was Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld right when he accused the media of lurching from positive to negative in reporting the war?

"We have seen mood swings in the media from highs to lows to highs and back again, sometimes in a single, twenty-four-hour period," he said at a Pentagon briefing about ten days into the fighting. "For some, the massive TV coverage — and it is massive — and the breathless reports can seem to be somewhat disorienting.'

Rumsfeld is right on this one. In the first days of the war, when U.S. units were racing almost unimpeded toward Baghdad, many news organizations described the fighting as the proverbial "cakewalk" that some of the war's sup-

porters had predicted.

Dexter Filkins of The New York Times was so impressed with the way the first units broke through the Kuwait-Iraqi border and overran the town of Safwan, he predicted in an off-air interview with the NewsHour that he would be filing from Basra the next day, Instead, stubborn Iraqi resistance kept British troops at bay for two weeks.

A week later, as Iraqi irregulars were harassing and slowing U.S. units in Nasiriya's "ambush alley," commentators back in Washington were describing a Vietnam-like quagmire. The "operational pause," when units stood in place and waited out a vicious sandstorm, was widely reported as a sign of a flawed battle plan and overextended supply lines. Then, after the sandstorms had cleared and the U.S. units resumed their northward march, many organizations were caught by surprise by the speed with which the Army and Marines took Baghdad. In hindsight, more patience and a longer view would have produced better reporting and analysis. Overall grade for consistency . . .

Did the media fall for the Pentagon's spin?

In a word, yes. Remember "shock and awe?" Given the advance billing, news organizations played the Pentagon's game by suggesting that the first phase of bombing in Baghdad would be decisive.

Beyond that, too many reporters accepted the military's description of the Republican Guard as a formidable force, when in fact those units rolled up like a cheap carpet in the face of the U.S. advance. News organizations accepted without much question the Pentagon's forecast that Baghdad would be fiercely defended. When it fell with only spotty resistance, the American performance seemed all the more impressive. Amid all the reports of success, major battlefield lapses were insufficiently reported and analyzed. The first major assault by Apache helicopters was one example. The raid was a disaster, with one aircraft downed, its crew captured, and the rest of the choppers so badly shot up by ground fire that the entire unit was rendered incapable of fighting. But it was reported as just one more development in a busy day of war news. Overall

grade for gullibility . . .

Did media jingoism compromise objectivity? Again, guilty as charged. It was not just the flagrant examples: the on-screen flags and lapel pins, the breathless embedded television correspondent describing how "we" went on patrol. It was the cheerleading, can-do tone that infected too much of the reporting as U.S. forces advanced against an overpowered, overwhelmed enemy. After all, it was never going to be a fair fight between the superbly equipped, precision-guided U.S. military machine and the rag-tag Iraqi units. The U.S. had been bombing Iraq for a decade, destroying its air defenses and grounding its air force. Too little of the reporting pointed out those realities.

Also, the war had an almost sanitized quality as it came across on U.S. television screens. In part, this was due to the long-distance nature of the fighting; Iraq was a huge, spread-out battlefield. But news organizations also were concerned about the impact back home, and thus showed few if any American casualties and only occasional Iraqi victims. European and pan-Arab channels showed far more. The contrast was striking. The concern for the sensibilities of the U.S. audience and the troops was understandable, but the net result was a "clean" war, rather than the gory mess it was.

In addition, few questions were asked when the much-advertised weapons of mass destruction failed to materialize, and the larger political goals of the war were not subjected to hard-headed analysis. The rise of anti-Americanism in Europe and the Arab and Muslim world was muffled once the shooting started. News organizations described how "freedom fries"

had replaced French fries on some menus, but spent little time examining the actual content and motivations behind the French position. It was as though the powerful images from the drowned out battlefield thoughtful evaluation of what was really happening. Overall grade for balance . . .

Even larger questions arise for the media in the postwar period.

Will news organizations be willing to commit the staff and airtime and space to cover the complex but less sexy task of rebuilding Iraq? Or will the beancounters compel most journalists to abandon the field? Here, the early signs are not good. The networks moved quickly to call most of their reporters home. It remains to be seen how many will be deployed in the region six months from now.

Will the hard questions be asked about what the war accomplished and what it did not? Or will the media move on to the next crisis, as with Afghanistan? Again, the signs are not encouraging. As the fighting subsided, and we learned more about the Hussein regime, there should have been more pieces analyzing whether, in fact, Iraq had posed a national security threat to the United States, as President Bush repeatedly contended. What, exactly, were the links between Iraq and international terrorism? Did Iraq really play any role in September 11? All good questions, awaiting an-

Will news organizations hold the administration accountable to its promise to vigorously pursue an Israeli-Palestinian settlement? Or will that commitment be ignored?

Will the cable channels switch their famously fickle focus to more tabloid fare? Will it be wall-to-wall Laci Peterson rather than the aftermath of the biggest U.S. adventure overseas since the first gulf war?

Gulf War II, the real-time war, it seems, has so far posed more questions for news organizations than it has answered.

Terence Smith is the media correspondent and senior producer for The News-Hour with Jim Lehrer. He has covered wars in Vietnam, Israel, and Cyprus.

# TV: A MISSED OPPORTUNITY



INCOMING: Mid-interview, CNN's Walter Rodgers hears enemy fire

BY PAUL FRIEDMAN

fter a week of war, a senior producer at one of the network news divisions was reduced to muttering darkly about a Pentagon conspiracy. Much had been said about unprecedented media access to the front lines, but with descriptions flowing in of bloody pitched battles in Basra and Umm Qasr, the producer complained, "I have yet to see decent video of a firefight."

Very little went as predicted. The war did not open with a bomb attack designed to reduce the enemy to "shock and awe," but with a focused attack aimed at Saddam Hussein and his leadership core. Not all Iraqi soldiers ran away, and not all that many civilians greeted their liberators with open arms. Broadcast networks quickly returned to basketball games and highly rated sitcoms and Oscar ceremonies, and were only mildly criticized. Then they left 24/7 coverage to cable news, and waited for a major battle for Baghdad that never took place. And news coverage of this war - even with the heralded "embedding" of more than 600 journalists in dozens of armed forces units - was less dramatically different than many had expected.

The embedding process was, in a sense, a bold return to the Vietnam War, the last time the government was willing to take its chances with giving reporters the freedom to cover military action up close, with few restrictions. For television, the combination of access and new technology meant the possibility of covering the war live from the battlefield. War meets the small video camera and instant transmission via computer, videophone, and satellite. How much more dramatic could it get? Yet embedding did not live up to advance billing, at least at the beginning. Still, as time went on, the impact of embedded reporters became very important, and a central part of the debate over the war. Of course, we should not have been sur-

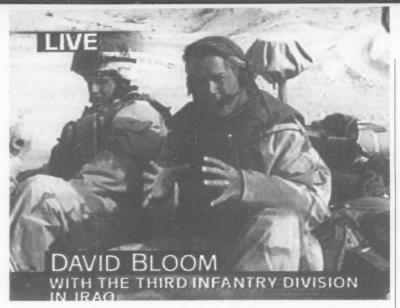
# THE LONG-DISTANCE WAR

At first, the embedded television reports had a gee-whiz quality that overwhelmed the fact that very little information was being conveyed. NBC's David Bloom (later, tragically, to die of an embolism) traveled at high speeds across the Iraqi desert, broadcasting live from his customized "Bloommobile," and making other broadcasters drool with envy. The pictures were irresistibly fascinating, though perhaps not crammed with information. ABC's Ted Koppel gave view-

ers one of the first embedded reports to deliver on the potential of live television; he was able to bring together stunning pictures, information, and vivid descriptions from the scene of a massive column of armored vehicles breaching the berms into Iraq. It was hard for any viewer not to be impressed with the sight of the seemingly endless column of tanks and personnel carriers, unchallenged, starting the long trek toward Baghdad. Never mind that other units not too far away were crossing the berms and coming under fire; we would all soon learn (and some would complain) that the embedded reports, while largely accurate, could only supply small "slices" of reality, and might not reflect the overall picture. Never mind that Koppel's conversation with Peter Jennings, thousands of miles away in a New York studio, clearly showed how impressed they were with what was playing out before them; it may have provided the Pentagon with exactly what it wanted (as some critics predicted the embedding would do). But it was unavoidable, and it was early.

Many of the early reports from the embedded television reporters were of the standing-in-front-of-the-camera, chest-thumping, look-at-where-I-am, and we're-ready-to-go-but-I-can't-tell-you-exactly-where-for-security-reasons variety, followed by the anchors back home warning the reporters to "stay safe" and

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asking them to relay best wishes to the troops. (Fox's Shepard Smith to correspondent Rick Leventhal, embedded with the Marines: "Rick, Godspeed and our best to the men there.") On the move, the reporters and their cameramen followed a story they usually could not really see; it's the nature of modern warfare that much of it takes place with the enemy a long distance away. The embedded reporter and camera see weapons fired at an unseen enemy and, if they are lucky (or unlucky), they may see tracers of weapons fired back. But there is seldom the time or the mobility needed to reconstruct what happened and tell a complete story. Leventhal described one of the first Marine engagements as a "tremendous pyrotechnics display" of outgoing artillery fire, but "whether they're hitting their targets, we cannot tell you." Later, as American troops closed on Baghdad, there was video of destroyed Iraqi armor, pickup trucks with mounted weapons, and other vehicles. But nothing matched the reports of hundreds of tanks destroyed, and there was certainly no video to document reports of thousands of Iraqi soldiers killed. Either the bodies were removed before the embedded units caught up with the targets they'd attacked from miles away or they were steering around them. Or the reports were off base.

Some of the best live television reports came when the story found the camera: NBC's Bloom was on camera when a powerful sandstorm brought total darkness at 4:15 in the afternoon; CNN's Walter Rodgers was doing an otherwise routine live interview with an Army sergeant when the soldier turned and fear crept across his face as he heard incoming fire, and they both ran for cover.

### THE TECHNOLOGY TRAP

Most of the pictures were not very special. Even though there was much tougher fighting than predicted, little of it was seen on video. (Anyone who doubts it should have spent an hour or two watching the same few seconds of footage repeated over and over again, often when it bore no relation to what was being discussed.) The reasons for the scarcity of great combat video will not be absolutely clear until the embedded reporters, producers, and cameramen are thoroughly debriefed after the war, but several factors seem to be involved (in addition to the long-distance nature of much of the fighting). The journalists embedded with American units had to stick close to them, both because they were on the move a lot, and because the military was worried about the journalists' safety and restricted their movements. (Several journalists who tried to go it alone got in bad trouble quickly; two died in the first days of the war.) Journalists embedded with British units were given somewhat greater slack; partially because of that and partially because of the close fighting the British forces did in southern Iraq, most of the "good" video in the first stages of the war came from the British agencies.

In addition, the American television journalists put enormous emphasis on making frequent live transmissions, which forced them to spend a great deal of time on the logistics and technology — time that could not be spent on gathering pictures and information for more complete stories. It turned out the technology was not quite ready for this war. The small cameras were great until the

sand and general wear and tear ruined them; ABC's Mike Cerre took four cameras with him and complained he was down to the last one as his Marine unit neared Baghdad. New, small satellite transmission equipment either failed completely or worked less often than hoped. The "store and forward" technique of transferring video to the laptop and then by telephone to the States did provide excellent quality, but it took too much time — roughly thirty minutes to feed one minute. At least half of what viewers saw on television was transmitted by videophone, a relatively old technique that is fast and simple to use, but produces very rough video and ragged sound. The best pictures from this war were the still photos and, ironically, the video over which American journalists had no control. Until the troops reached Baghdad at the end of the third week, there were many days when the best video came from cameras abandoned by the networks on the roofs of Baghdad but still transmitting, or from the cameras transmitting from U.S. weapons and shown at Pentagon briefings to document direct hits, or from government cameras covering the nighttime rescue of Private Jessica Lynch and the nighttime invasion of a presidential palace.

# **RUMSFELD'S PROBLEMS**

Still, reporters who knew how to report and write and speak were able to use embedding to their advantage and ours. After three decades of tight control by the government, combat news actually was found and reported within minutes of its happening, and well before military briefers confirmed it and doled it out. The most dramatic early example of this, ironically, brought memories of Vietnam: a "fragging" incident in the headquarters tents of the 101st Airborne. Embedded journalists reported it quickly, and one of them - who said he was listening in on Army radios at the base almost immediately was able to knock down initial reports of terrorism, and correctly identify the suspect as an American soldier. We are left to guess how soon, or even whether, the Pentagon would have revealed all this if there had been no reporters at the scene.

More important, it was embedded reporters who gave us the first indications that the campaign against Saddam Hussein was not going as predicted. CNN's Rodgers, talking to the camera, unaided by pictures, was able to paint vivid word

CBS EVENIFICIAL NEWYS WITH DAN WATER

pictures of the relentless small attacks on units of the Seventh Cavalry as they pushed north and across the Euphrates River — "Seventy-two hours of continuous fighting," he said. ABC's Koppel reported that all thirty-two Apache helicopters returning from a mission had bullet holes in them. CNN's Martin Savidge described a hazardous mission to refuel forward elements running dangerously low on fuel; others reported shortages of food and water, and cases of rationing. The BBC's David Willis, with U.S. Marines in central Iraq, reported that "we've got to the stage where some of the infantry here are down to one meal a day, so it's a pretty difficult situation supplying such a large and high-tech army." John Roberts of CBS was able to feed pictures of marines trying to protect convoys near Nasiriya, and raised questions about whether there were enough troops to protect the long lines of supply.

All of this was quite different from the initial pictures of rapid advances by U.S. forces, and the reaction was swift. After less than a week of war, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld complained that while the "breathtaking" minute-byminute coverage was generally accurate, the "slices" of reported fighting lacked overall context and made people believe the fighting had been going on for weeks rather than days. The plan, he said re-

peatedly, was working.

Secretary Rumsfeld's argument had two problems. First, day after day the embedded reporters were gathering evidence at the scene. It turns out, of course, that while embedding runs the risk of some journalists' getting too chummy with soldiers, it also means that some soldiers get chummy with journalists - and they talk. They talk about bad decisions, malfunctioning equipment, dwindling supplies, and an enemy that wasn't rolling over the way it was supposed to. (Marine sergeant to reporter, on camera: "The United States was planning on walking in here like it was easy and all . . . . It's not that easy to conquer a country, is it?") That was Rumsfeld's second problem: before the war, when the administration was selling it, most background briefings predicted a relatively quick, easy fight, and minimized worries about troop levels and long supply lines. There were some public pronouncements - like those of some officials predicting a collapsing Iraqi "house of cards" — that helped create an overly optimistic set of expectations.

Still, there was merit in the objection raised by Secretary Rumsfeld and others that more context was needed. It got support from disparate members of the media.

CNN's anchor, Aaron Brown, said during one broadcast that the embedded reporters give us "snapshots" of what is going on, "and it's our job here to put it all together." ABC's George Will observed somewhat more elegantly that "today's problem — live television from journalists with units engaged in Iraq — is the problem of context. Up-close combat engagements almost always look confusing and awful because they are." Necessarily, it was up to the anchors, former generals, and other experts to provide context. They did, often ad nauseam.

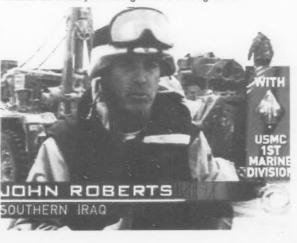
What was really missing were the kinds of stories that came out of Vietnam: the upclose and detailed stories with beginnings, middles, and ends; the gritty, gripping stories about people and courage and fear and heroism. It did not matter that it took days for those stories to make it back to the States and onto the air. They gave us much more than tiny slices of war and they were, in their way, timeless just the opposite of what was most prized by news executives who were driven to compete this time on terms dictated by the twenty-four-hour cable networks: put as many people as possible in as many places as possible, and use smaller, lighter gear to get them on the air live. That need dovetailed nicely with the Pentagon's tight restrictions on the number of journalists and the amount of television equipment it could or would accommodate with each unit. But it did not pro-

duce the kind of While the embedded journalists were brave, and often endured conditions that well-trained soldiers ten to forty younger years found tough, it was unrealistic to expect two-pertelevision son teams working under such conditions with inadequate equipment to do much more than they did. Especially in tough situations, television journalists must be allowed to concentrate on the jobs they do best. It is the oldfashioned (and more expensive) model that allows reporters to report, producers to produce, cameramen to take pictures, and technicians to worry about sound and lights and keeping the gear working. It's not always necessary - different stories require different resources — but it is no coincidence that this war's most memorable pieces were turned in by strong reporters (ABC's Koppel and CBS's Scott Pelley stood out), whowhether embedded or not - had the benefit of working with a producer, an extra crew member, and sometimes a satellite technician. They also had the personal clout or the support from editors back home to take more time on their pieces and less on "live shots."

The ambitious experiment with embedding started to wind down as American troops took over in Baghdad, and embedded journalists began to leave their units to pursue their own stories. The triumph in Baghdad provided the war's most symbolic piece of video: the statue of Saddam being pulled down from its pedestal in Firdos Square. But it was not embedding that produced this demonstration of television's power to define a story. The scene played out in front of the Palestine Hotel, where many journalists rode out the war, and where the cameras waited.

Paul Friedman, former executive vicepresident and former managing editor for ABC News, is senior news consultant to ABC News and consults for other networks as well.

television journalism we deserved. EYEWITNESS: In Nasiriya Roberts raised questions about whether the military had enough "boots on the ground."





CJR asked nine journalists to share their experiences in the Iraq war. Here are their reports.

# DISPATCHES SLICES OF THE WAR

# **GRUNTS AND POGUES:**THE EMBEDDED LIFE



BY GORDON DILLOW

as an embedded reporter during the war in Iraq, I found myself at what the U.S. Marines call "the point of the spear."

Along with Mark Avery, an *Orange County Register* photographer, I was assigned to Alpha Company, First Battalion, Fifth Marine Regiment, an in-

fantry or "grunt" company based at Camp Pendleton, California. The 200 men of Alpha Company (there are no women in Marine infantry units) would be the first major U.S. ground combat unit to cross the Iraq border on the first night of the war and then would push more than 300 miles across Iraq, all the way to Baghdad. During the war

they would arguably engage in more intense combat than any other Marine infantry company.

Journalistically, there was no better place to be. But covering the spear point wasn't always easy.

Marine grunts are often an insular, standoffish bunch even among other marines; they pride themselves on being leaner, harder, somehow more marine-like. Rear-echelon types are dismissed as "pogues" — rhymes with "rogues" — a term said to stand for "Persons Other than Grunts." And to the marines, no one occupies a lower, more miserable place in the pogue world than reporters.

They had been warned about us, I found out later. Be careful what you say to them, the marines of Alpha Company were told before we joined them in early March, while they were camped out in the barren Kuwaiti desert. Don't bitch about the slow mail delivery, don't criticize the antiwar protesters back home, don't discuss operational plans, and for God's sake, don't use ethnic slur words for Arabs.

Better yet, don't talk to the reporters at all. They'll just stab you in the back.

Some marines didn't take the advice; they were open and

approachable from the start. (For example, it took about five minutes to learn that the marines called Arabs "hajis" — pronounced HA-jees, derivation unknown — and that, in the marine grunt view, antiwar protesters were traitorous scum.) It also helped that I'd already had some war experience. I'd been an Army sergeant in Vietnam, an ancient, almost mythical war to the grunts, most of whom are nineteen or twenty.

But most of the Alpha Company officers and senior NCOs initially acted as if having journalists along was like having snakes crawl into their tent; some were convinced that reporters were little better than spies. It took a couple of weeks of sharing their hardships and dangers before they realized that we weren't using our Iridium cell phones to alert the Iraqi

army high command to the Marines' next move.

The physical hardships were constant. Sandstorms, rainstorms — once in southern Iraq there was a rainstorm *during* a sandstorm — mud, dust, suffocating heat in the day, teeth-chattering cold at night, sleeping on the ground, or in the ground in shallow "fighting holes" that we had to dig ourselves with entrenching tools. In the desert, precious water was for drinking only; like the marines, I went more than a month without a shower. (Because of a packing mix-up, I had to wear the same unwashed underwear for three weeks, until I could rinse it out in a scummy canal on the outskirts of Baghdad; then I wore it another week.)

Compared with the constant physical misery, the periodic danger seemed almost like a minor irritant. Although the Iraqi army didn't put up much of a fight, Alpha Company got into two serious scrapes. One was at the dawn of the war, at an oil-pumping station just across the border, where a few die-hard Iraqi soldiers in a speeding truck shot and killed Lieutenant Shane Childers. (Three other marines were wounded by a mine.) The other was deep in Baghdad, where fedayeen fighters with AK-47s and rocket-propelled grenades blistered the company with thousands of rounds of fire during a running four-hour firefight, killing Gunnery Sergeant Jeff Bohr Jr. and wounding twenty-five Alpha Company marines, half of them superficially.

The Baghdad fight was a close enough thing that at one point a marine gave me a hand grenade to throw if the enemy started to overwhelm us. It had been more than thirty years since I'd held a grenade, and I knew that my having it violated written and unwritten rules. Still, it felt comforting in my

hand. (I never had occasion to throw it.)

The discomforts and dangers of the war were easily dealt with; accurately conveying the reality of it to the readers back home was not.

Part of that was unavoidable. The astonishing crudity of young men in wartime — your average marine wouldn't say "I have to go on guard," but rather, "I fucking have to fucking go on fucking guard." It wouldn't fly in a family newspaper; neither would the constant jokes about sex and bodily functions. The result was that the marines sounded much more like choirboys in my stories than they really are. And some things were simply too gruesome to describe in detail.

Reporting casualty figures also presented problems. The ground rules for embeds prohibited reporting the names of dead or wounded until their relatives were officially notified, usually within forty-eight hours. It was a sensible rule, but I also knew that back home a large network of First Battalion, Fifth Marines families were following our reports in the paper and on the Internet — and when I reported that the battalion had suffered an unidentified KIA or WIA I knew it could, and did, cause all of them great anxiety.

The Baghdad fight was a close enough thing that at one point a marine gave me a hand grenade. I knew that my having it violated written and unwritten rules. Still, it felt comforting in my hand.

But the biggest problem I faced as an embed with the marine grunts was that I found myself doing what journalists are warned from J-school not to do: I found myself falling in love with my subject. I fell in love with "my" marines.

Maybe it's understandable. When you live with the same guys for weeks, sharing their dangers and miseries, learning about their wives and girlfriends, their hopes and dreams, admiring their physical courage and strength, you start to make friends — closer friends in some ways than you'll ever have outside of war. Isolated from everyone else, you start to see your small corner of the world the same way they do.

I didn't hide anything. For example, when some of my marines fired up a civilian vehicle that was bearing down on them, killing three unarmed Iraqi men, I reported it — but I didn't lead my story with it, and I was careful to put it in the context of scared young men trying to protect themselves. Or when my marines laughed about how .50-caliber machine gun bullets had torn apart an Iraqi soldier's body, I wrote about it, but in the context of sweet-faced, all-American boys hardened by a war that wasn't of their making.

And so on. The point wasn't that I wasn't reporting the truth; the point was that I was reporting the marine grunt truth — which had also become my truth.

I'll leave it to others to decide if it was good journalism. But it was easily one of the greatest experiences of my life.

And for all the misery and hardship and pain, I was sorry when it was over.

- Gordon Dillow is a columnist for the Orange County Register.

# THE HIGH PRICE OF AN UNFORGIVING WAR

BY MICHAEL MASSING



t the Coalition Media Center, on the As Sayliyah military base, the reigning sentiment was frustration. More than 700 journalists were registered at the center, and all were competing for the same small morsels of information from a public-affairs staff notably stingy with it. Fortunately, I had come on

a different kind of mission — to monitor issues of journalistic safety and access on behalf of the Committee to Protect Journalists. I hoped to raise matters of concern with someone in authority at the U.S. Central Command. Soon after my arrival, I found that person: an Air Force colonel who, with nearly three decades in the service, was one of the senior members on the Centcom press team. He said he'd be happy to field my queries.



Over the next two weeks, there would be many of them. The war was proving unforgiving to journalists. In some cases, the attacks they suffered were the unavoidable cost of covering a war. Journalists died from land mines, suicide bombs, and accidents on the battlefield. Four journalists in Baghdad, including two from *Newsday*, disappeared — at the hands, it turned out, of the Iraqi government, which accused them of being spies. Pressure from *Newsday*, CPJ, and many other organizations eventually helped win their release.

Many incidents, however, involved the U.S. military. I duly took them up with the colonel. At first, he seemed responsive. Early on, for instance, I raised with him the case of four journalists — two Israelis and two Portuguese — who had been detained by U.S. troops at gunpoint in central Iraq. According to the journalists, the U.S. — accusing them of being spies — had held them for more than forty-eight hours, denying them food and water. When one of the Portuguese journalists tried to talk with the soldiers, he was beaten, thrown on the floor, and handcuffed. Eventually, the journalists were flown by helicopter to Kuwait City and released.

The incident raised serious questions about the military's treatment of "unilateral" journalists. The colonel said he would look into it but needed to know more about where the journalists had been picked up and by which unit. After getting more details, I forwarded them to him in an e-mail. That was the last I heard of the matter.

Next, I approached the colonel about the case of an ITN TV crew who had been caught in crossfire near Basra. Correspondent Terry Lloyd had died in the attack. His cameraman, Fred Nerac, and translator, Hussein Osman, were still missing. Reports from the field suggested that the crew had been hit by both coalition and Iraqi fire. Fred Nerac's wife was appealing to the U.S. government to help find him. CPJ joined in her appeal, and to help push it, I sent an e-mail to the colonel asking

him what, if anything, Centcom was doing to investigate. Again, I never heard back.

Then, on the morning of April 8, the war came to central Baghdad, and journalists were prominent among the casualties. In one incident, a U.S. air strike severely damaged the office of al-Jazeera, killing one of its correspondents. (See "The Bombing of Al-Jazeera," page 37.) Moments later, another explosion damaged the nearby office of Abu Dhabi TV. Finally, a U.S. tank opened fire on the Palestine Hotel, the main base for journalists in Baghdad. One cameraman was killed, and a second would die shortly after.

The attacks sent shock waves through the media center. At that day's press briefing Brigadier General Vincent Brooks was peppered with questions. In response, he said that the United States regretted the loss of life and extended its condolences to the families of the fallen journalists. He insisted that the United States did not target journalists. Brooks said that coalition forces operating near the Palestine Hotel had come under fire from its lobby and that a tactical decision had been made to fire back. When asked if the coalition forces could be ordered not to fire on journalists' strongholds, he replied: "We don't know every place a journalist is operating on the battlefield. We only know those journalists that are operating with us," i.e. those who were embedded. Any other journalists on the field of battle, he added, were "putting themselves at risk."

The next day, I asked to see the colonel. He received me at his desk inside the Centcom press office. I handed him a letter that CPJ had sent to the secretary of defense expressing its grave concern over the attacks and urging the Pentagon to investigate them. I said my purpose in meeting now was not to discuss why these attacks had occurred but rather how future ones could be avoided. Let us, I said, take at face value Centcom's claim that the attack on the Palestine Hotel was an accident. Let us further assume, as reports from Baghdad

were suggesting, that the commander of the tank unit that fired on the hotel had not known that it was packed with journalists, and, moreover, that he may have mistaken a cameraman on a balcony for a spotter for Iraqi fighters. Would it not be possible in the future to inform commanders in the field about sites where journalists were staying so that they could avoid attacking them?

No, the colonel said flatly. Journalists were there at their own peril; the only way for them to stay safe would be to leave the combat zone. I pointed out that only a handful of sites were involved. At its daily briefings, I added, Centcom had noted that it exercised special caution with regard to schools, mosques, hospitals, and historic sites. Would it not be possible to add journalistic sites to the list?

No, the colonel insisted. Baghdad was a battlefield. If troops believed they were coming under fire, they had a right to return it. Providing journalistic locations in advance was out of the question. I tried pressing the point, but the colonel grew irritable, and the meeting quickly broke up.

I understood the colonel's position. Soldiers in the field have one main mission — to defeat the enemy while minimizing costs to themselves — and they don't want to jeopardize it by having to worry about a bunch of journalists. But journalists have a job to do as well, and, given the U.S. military's stated determination to avoid civilian casualties, refraining from attacking a building full of journalists would not seem to be asking too much.

The colonel's stance, together with Brooks's comments at the briefings, led me to one disturbing conclusion — that the U.S. military believed that only reporters who were officially embedded had the right to protection. Everyone else was at risk — and expendable.

- Michael Massing is a CJR contributing editor.

# FOR THE UNILATERALS, NO NEUTRAL GROUND

BY IOHN DONVAN



hree days into covering the war in southern Iraq — not embedded, not in a tank, but getting around the old-fashioned way in a plain old civilian four-wheel-drive — my crew and I decided it was time to rip the duct tape off the car. This is the tape that spelled out — in eightinch letters — "TV" on every side of the ve-

hicle. It is how reporters send the message: "Don't shoot! I'm a journalist!"

We were peeling off the tape because, in *this* war, if you weren't an embed, you were, like it or not, a *unilateral* — a term the Pentagon came up with and emblazoned across your military-issued press card. In other recent wars, most journalists were, in effect, unembedded. The safest thing for journalists was to shout from the rooftops that they were present at the conflict *as reporters*, not combatants. This time, the opposite may have been true.

It came down to this. The Iraqis saw journalists as part of an invading force. And the invaders — the coalition forces — saw unilaterals as having no business on *their* battlefield. There was no neutral ground.

The Pentagon's stated reason for discouraging unilateral reporting was, I think, genuine. "It seems like stating the obvious," said Victoria Clarke, the Pentagon spokeswoman, in the first week of the war, "but it is very, very dangerous out there." The military not only didn't want reporters getting hurt taking risks outside the embed system. It also didn't want to have to rescue them when they got into trouble.

This was not just hypothetical, as I learned almost as soon as I drove north from Kuwait, through a hole in the border fence (amazing as that sounds, but there it was!), and into the Iraqi city of Safwan.

As my team and I tooled about Safwan, the first real city the coalition rolled through, we heard that just a little to the north of us a unilateral British TV reporter had just been shot dead. A few miles to the east, we then heard, a Lebanese news crew, also unilaterals, had run into snipers. And up the highway, toward Nasiriya, a *Newsweek* writer and his photographer, also working outside the embed system, had been chased by Iraqi forces and were about to be captured. One of their *Newsweek* colleagues, who was still in Safwan, was urgently seeking British army help in rescuing them.

All these reports reached us within the space of an hour, late on that first afternoon in Iraq. Given that we had just been discussing a forward advance of our own into this territory before nightfall, it gave us pause. Iraqi troops, clearly, were going after journalists. They weren't reading the duct tape on the car. Or, more chillingly to us, maybe they were.

But if the Pentagon's Clarke was right (and she was), if this was so obviously dangerous (and it was), then why go unilaterally at all? The answer came that first day in Safwan. There was a story there that hadn't been told. The Iraqis of Safwan were not dancing in the streets. In what would become a pattern elsewhere in Iraq, U.S. troops (and the reporters embedded with them) would often witness a warm welcome at the front end of the coalition advance. But later, when the tanks had rolled by, that would change.

Safwan is the city that gave the world that widely broadcast image of a just-liberated Iraqi slapping Saddam Hussein's portrait with his shoe. But only hours later, we encountered hostility. Everyone we met voiced suspicion of U.S. intentions, outrage over civilian casualties, and skepticism over promises of U.S. aid. The message from the people of Safwan — now voiced by many Iraqis in many places — was that the U.S. has its work cut out for it. Just getting rid of the dictator is not enough to win the hearts and minds of the people.

To the early credit of ABC News, which insisted on unilateral reporting to complement its embedded coverage, we broadcast all this in the war's first few days, while most television coverage stayed focused on the combat. It was a part of the story no embedded reporter could see. And it was vital to

'If we got into trouble, did we, as unilaterals, have the right to expect the military to rescue us? How do you explain to some marine's mother that he died trying to save an idiot journalist?'

forming the big-picture answer to the question: How is the

war going?

It seemed crazy-dangerous to be knocking about southern Iraq, with Iraqi troops trying to get us; with a local population inclined to be unfriendly (Iraqi civilians had already, on the first day, rushed our parked cars and stolen our phones, our radios, and a camera); and with a U.S. military that didn't want us there. Yet we wanted to stay independent, behind the lines, and among the civilians. The question was: How to stay unilateral and also stay safe?

The first solution we came up with seemed workable: work days in Iraq, sleep overnight in Kuwait. After our day in Safwan, we exited Iraq, returning to Kuwait and a farmhouse ABC had rented for us a stone's throw from the border. Yes, it was still effectively a war zone, but Kuwait felt safer. Nights in Kuwait also let us replenish the three vital items that were impossible to come by in southern Iraq: water, gasoline, and

power for our camera batteries.

Good plan. Except that when we returned to the hole in the fence to re-enter Iraq the next day, it had been closed. We drove to the official border crossing, hoping to talk our way past the Kuwaiti and American soldiers serving as border guards. Instead we found a long line of our fellow unilaterals who were being told by coalition soldiers that Iraq was closed to them. Embeds Only, their orders said.

We did not make it into Iraq that day.

Then came day three, and a new plan. We would perch near the border crossing, hope for a convoy of vehicles carrying humanitarian assistance workers who had permission to enter Iraq, and when we spotted one, try to fold ourselves into their ranks. That was the day we tore off the duct tape. We needed the disguise. And it worked.

For the next several days, we slipped in and out of Iraq in the company of aid workers, often reporting on their efforts, which became an essential aspect of the hearts-and-minds story, and exploring the south, pretty much at will.

Within a week, however, virtually all the unilaterals entering from Kuwait were helping themselves to the aid convoy gimmick, and the U.S. military shut it down. The border was truly sealed after we made one last crossing into Iraq.

At that point, we got lucky. A U.S. military unit inside Iraq adopted us, offered us food, water, and most important, a safe place to spend the night. By day, we worked unilaterally, covering the looting of Basra, visiting a vacated Iraqi prison, filming a village of Shiites worshipping in their unique way for the first time in decades, and gathering impressions of what the Iraqis made of their American occupiers.

By night, we slept, soundly in our tents, with U.S. military protection *like* embeds, but not exactly embedded. It was a nearly perfect solution. And we kept up our end of the bar-

gain, by staying out of trouble.

On that point, an afterthought: as my crew and producers and I traveled the south, we talked about what we would do if we got into trouble. Did we as unilaterals have the right to expect the military to rescue us? As one of us said, "How are you going to explain to some marine's mother that he died trying to save an idiot journalist?"

Fortunately, we never had to ask that question in practice. We came out of the war grateful that we never did get into serious trouble, and that the story we told counted — no matter what it said on our press cards.

- John Donvan is an ABC News correspondent.

# BAGHDAD: MINDING YOUR MINDER



BY ANTHONY SHADID

Before the war, in Saddam Hussein's Iraq, one of the many things that made reporting there so difficult were the escorts — minders, in the language of journalists; guides, in the language of the government. They were dispatched by the information ministry to accompany any foreign reporter working in Iraq.

Their job description left little room for subtlety: rigorous surveillance. For reporters who didn't speak Arabic, they made sure a lot was lost in translation. By virtue of reports they filed to their superiors at the ministry, some journalists found themselves on blacklists. In virtually every case, the minders delivered a healthy dose of menace. One of them assigned to a major U.S. network — a brooding heavy right out of central casting — used to show up at his job with a pistol strapped to his hip.

I inherited my minder from a colleague, and within a few hours of meeting him, with the prospect of a U.S.-led invasion of the country just a week away, I knew I was remarkably lucky.

Tall and handsome, with the obligatory Baghdad moustache, Nasir was a former manager of Iraq's tourism board. Twelve years into U.N. sanctions that banned air travel, the government could spare him for other duties. He seemed to enjoy the switch. Surrounded by hard-drinking journalists, he could socialize into the early morning. With a certain relentlessness, he brushed up on his vulgarities, insults picked up from American films that he used to introduce his every sentence. He was cavalier, as much as was permitted in Baathist Iraq. It was a trait that proved refreshing amid the ministry's ever-tightening control.

During the three weeks of war, in the stifling paranoia that settled like a fog over the city, there were few people you could trust. But by chance and circumstance, I ended up putting a remarkable degree of faith in Nasir. In the end, he had a job, and I had a job, and we found a way to make sure those jobs at least overlapped.

In reporting the war in Baghdad, I hoped to chronicle, to the degree that was possible, the war's impact on the city and its people. This required a measure of unvarnished opinions. In peacetime Baghdad, that was difficult enough. In war, it was the biggest challenge of my time there. In large measure, I relied on contacts that I had made in two previous trips, in 1998 and 2002. I had canvassed Iraqi friends in the United States for friends or relatives who might be willing to meet with me. And I pressed expatriates and Iraqis working with nongovernmental organizations in Baghdad for help in setting up private interviews inside residents' homes.

In his own way, Nasir made those interviews work. On several occasions, he looked the other way as I visited the contacts — a clear breach of the ministry's orders that minders stay with reporters at all times. There was always a plausible denial — that I was lunching, that I was going to check up on a friend, or that I had errands to run. None were all that convincing, but with a shrug, Nasir accepted them. Time and again, he never asked questions. I had the sense that he felt the less he knew, the better.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 38** 

# THE BOMBING OF AL-JAZEERA

BY MICHAEL MASSING

n Monday, April 7, Jihad Ballout, the press spokesman for al-Jazeera, phoned me at my hotel and asked me to come to the network's offices in Doha, Qatar. As the war progressed, al-Jazeera's concerns about the safety of its reporters had grown, and it wanted to discuss them with me in my capacity as a representative of the Committee to Protect Journalists.

Al-Jazeera's offices, built with a \$140-million grant from the emir of Qatar, are as modern as any western network's. Its sleek, cavernous newsroom is filled with banks of computers and anchored by a wall of monitors showing satellite feeds from around the world. I was led into the office of Mohamed Jasem al-Ali, al-Jazeera's managing director. It was large, spotless, and lined with plaques from business groups and charities. Joining us were Ibrahim Helal, the station's editor in chief, and Sheik Hamad bin Thamer al-Thani, the chairman of the board. A member of the Qatari royal family, Sheik Hamad (who was wearing traditional white robes) joined us — indicating the level of al-Jazeera's concern. He rarely meets with visiting journalists.

Over the next half hour, I learned about a series of troubling incidents involving the network. In Basra, its correspondents — the only ones reporting from that besieged city — were staying at the Sheraton Hotel. They were the only guests, and al-Jazeera — worried that the site might come under attack - had alerted the Pentagon to their presence. Nonetheless, the U.S. had dropped four bombs on the site; two of them exploded. No one was hurt, but the inci-

dent had been deeply unsettling.

Near Nasiriya, my hosts continued, an al-Jazeera reporter embedded with the Marines had been accosted by a member of the anti-Saddam Free Iraqi Forces traveling with the unit. The man had accused the correspondent of being an agent of Saddam and threatened to kill him. Shaken, the correspondent complained to the commander of the unit. The commander said there was nothing he could do. He further advised the correspondent not to file any more reports from the field. And, since then, he hadn't.

Finally, on the very day of my visit to al-Jazeera's offices, a member of its staff driving on a highway outside Baghdad had come upon a Marine checkpoint. When he presented his ID, he was waved on, but after he'd gone a short distance a marine had opened fire. The driver was not hurt, but his car was badly damaged, and al-Jazeera believed the incident was meant to send a message.

It was no secret that the U.S. military was unhappy with al-Jazeera. In the early days of the war, Centcom had rebuked the network for airing a tape of U.S. POWs being questioned by their Iraqi captors. Since then, al-Jazeera had been giving the U.S. position more coverage, airing the Pentagon and Centcom briefings. Still, it was highlighting antiwar demonstrations, the resistance inside Iraq, and angry statements from scholars and clerics. Above all, it was airing footage of civilian casualties. Over and over, it showed hospital wards overflowing with the victims of the fighting: children without limbs, women lying unconscious, men covered by burns. Such images were stoking passions in the Middle East.

Now U.S. forces were preparing to attack central Baghdad. Al-Jazeera's offices in the city were in a villa near the Republican Palace, the former information ministry, and other strategic sites. During the war in Afghanistan, its office in Kabul had been destroyed by a U.S. bomb. (The U.S. had claimed that the office was a "known Al Qaeda facility.") Remembering that, al-Jazeera had sent the Pentagon a letter before the start of the war, specifying the coordinates of its building in Baghdad and asking that it not be attacked. But al-Jazeera remained deeply concerned.

Back in my hotel, I wrote a memo summarizing what I'd learned. I planned to send it to CPJ's office in New York the next day. When I awoke in the morning and turned on the TV, however, I found that al-Jazeera's office in Baghdad had been bombed. I immediately called Jihad Ballout. The building, he said, had apparently been hit by a missile from a U.S. plane. Tariq Ayoub, a correspondent who had been on the roof directing al-Jazeera's cameras, had been killed. Ballout

urged me to return to al-Jazeera's offices.

rriving, I found the staff in a state of shock. Many of those in the building had known Tariq, and as the Inetwork played and replayed a tape of him on the roof the night before, they looked on in horror and disbelief.

Ibrahim Helal asked me to go on the air to discuss the incident. I hesitated, for I did not yet know the facts behind it and did not want to speak prematurely. But, as a representative of CPJ, I decided it was important to show that al-Jazeera was not alone, and so I quickly found myself sitting across from the anchorman Mohammed Krichene. A familiar face in the Arab world, Krichene seemed about to break down, but he managed to collect himself enough to lead me through the interview. In it, I expressed my deep concern over the attacks on journalists that had occurred that day. I noted my special concern about the attack on al-Jazeera, coming as it did after a host of troubling incidents.

Walking back out into the newsroom, I found people still clustered around the monitors. Most seemed in a daze; some were crying. While they watched, an Arabic-speaking representative of the U.S. government came on to express his sorrow over the incident. It was, he said, a "tragic accident," but

an accident nonetheless.

When he had finished, a receptionist glared at me. "I hate America," she snarled. "How can it do such things to us? This is how hatred for your country grows."

The military was unhappy with al-Jazeera. Over and over, the network highlighted antiwar demonstrations, Iraqi resistance, and civilian casualties — children without limbs, men covered by burns. Such images were stoking passions in the Middle East.

'I put a remarkable degree of faith in my moustachioed Iraqi minder, Nasir, who was cavalier — a refreshing trait amid the information ministry's ever-tightening controls'

Yet on occasion, he was complicit, waiting in the car as I did interviews. And toward the war's end, he was downright cooperative, bringing me to people who trusted him and who, in turn, trusted me. In one of those interviews, about the suffocating presence of Baath party militia in besieged cities of southern Iraq, I was told one of my favorite lines of the war. "If you take your shoe off and throw it outside, it will land on one of the Baath party guys," his friend said. Hitting someone with a shoe is a great insult in the Arab world, and Nasir smiled. It was the grin that comes with a hint of subversion.

We both understood that we were taking risks. "I'll be in prison," Nasir would say virtually every morning. "I'll be in prison tomorrow." And at times, we perhaps took too many risks. Just before U.S. troops arrived in Baghdad, we toured the outskirts of the city to gauge its defenses. We passed checkpoints, beyond the city's limits. The information ministry never knew of our trip, or so we thought. But the next day, I found my name on a list of fifty-two people to be expelled from Baghdad, and there were rumors — bluntly told to Nasir by his colleagues — that I was suspected of spying. With U.S. forces already on the outskirts, the order was too late and was never enforced, beyond a handwritten posting on the hotel wall.

I still wonder why Nasir did what he did. My risks, after all, were his risks, too.

No doubt, there was a current of opportunism in his cooperation — the kind of opportunism that filled the ranks of the Baath party for its thirty-five years of wretched rule. Like many others in the city, he could read the writing on the wall, even before the war started. Once, while we walked together in Baghdad, along a Shiite Muslim shrine with ornate tiles of blue, green, and black, he was bold in predicting the government's collapse. "Nobody here likes this guy," he told me, the reference obvious.

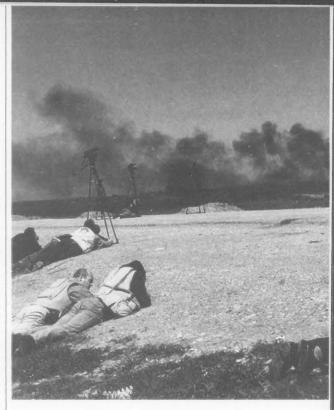
But opportunism only went so far. It was a war, and in all the turmoil that bred fear and distrust, grief and anger, people long for camaraderie.

In the war's last few days, Nasir stayed with his family at his home, in a neighborhood caught in often fierce fighting along the city's southern outskirts. I was far away in the Palestine Hotel, with the rest of the foreign journalists covering the conflict. After the American troops arrived, our relationship ended. I no longer had to keep up the pretense of working with a minder. The information ministry he worked for no longer existed, its senior staff having fled with money they bilked from reporters.

He had no car, no way to leave. And for a moment, I hesitated about rekindling contact. For a moment. A day after the war ended, I drove to Nasir's home to make sure his family was safe. He met me at the door.

"I thought you might come," he said, smiling the same subversive grin.

— Anthony Shadid is The Washington Post's Middle East correspondent



## IN THE NORTH, FEAR AND HATE

BY BORZOU DARAGAHI



is voice was frantic. "You guys have to come back toward Tikrit!" my photographer screamed into the satellite phone. "Our car broke down! You can't leave us!"

It was April 14, the day before U.S. Marines took Saddam Hussein's stronghold of Tikrit. But we had heard reports of General Tommy Franks saying on CNN

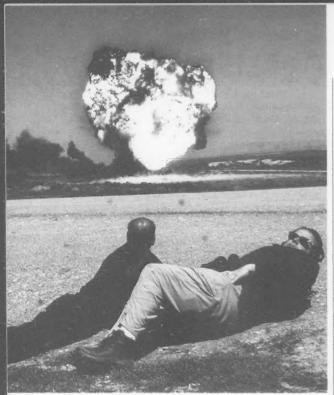
that the Americans were already there. An Associated Press photographer, Kevin Frayer, and I, driving behind a team from NBC, had entered the city with our translators and drivers only to find it devoid of any U.S. presence. Instead, it was filled with shady characters, condemning the U.S. and hailing Saddam Hussein. "Be careful," a man at a gas station told me. "There are Syrian suicide bombers here."

I was discreetly interviewing people when my Kurdish driver, Muhammad, suddenly demanded that I get back into the car, along with my translator, Tahseen, who is also Kurdish. Alarmed by his behavior, I complied. He suddenly burned rubber toward the bridge out of the city, with Kevin trying to follow behind in his nearly crippled vehicle.

"Please, stop the car," I said.

Normally an excellent driver and employee, Muhammad refused. "Please, stop the car," I repeated.

"There's nothing here," he kept repeating. "There's nothing



HHA/SP

here." Kevin was pleading on the phone, which I relayed to Muhammad. But still he refused to stop.

It was a learning experience. I always knew Iraqi Kurds mistrusted their Arab countrymen, who oppressed them for decades. But I never realized just how viscerally and primordially they hated each other until that day on the road from Tikrit. I think that, now that the war is over, tensions between the country's ethnic groups will be northern Iraq's big story.

My trusty driver and translator had hitherto accompanied me on the hairiest of missions. They hiked with me up a hill as we spied on the Badr Brigades, the Iranian-based Shiite Iraqi opposition group that had begun setting up a military camp southeast of Darbandekhan. They had tolerated the tedium of the Salahuddin opposition conference, where Iraqi windbags expounded on their visions for a democratic, pluralistic, federal Iraq while we shivered in third-rate hotels. They had guided me through the Halabja area, where Ansar al Islam, the extremist Islamist group holed up high in the mountains, had embarked on a campaign of assassination and bombings in the valley below. My driver had kept his cool as we came upon the scene of a car bomb northwest of Halabja that had just killed an Australian journalist and several Kurds.

Muhammad and Tahseen had helped me explore the back roads and smugglers' routes in the no-man's-land surrounding government-controlled Kirkuk. Antiaircraft tracers lit up my driver's face as he watched the coalition's nighttime bombing raids over that city, his hometown, and the Kurds' lost dream city. On April 10, we gunned it in a convoy behind Kurdish pesh merga and United States Special Forces as they stormed Khaneqin, a Baghdad-controlled city to the south of the autonomous Kurdish area, soaking up the adulation of residents

welcoming us to their newly liberated town. We sped through the desert past miles of abandoned Iraqi military positions and deserting Iraqi soldiers on our way to Kirkuk.

But those were all in Kurdistan. Now we were in Arabia, and my driver and translator were like fish out of water. All day long on the drive to Tikrit they had complained and fretted and resisted. They weren't unique. Two journalists from NBC had to fire one of their drivers midway to Tikrit because he refused to go any further.

But leaving Kevin behind was an altogether different story. "Stop the car, you coward!" I yelled at Muhammad. "Go back now! I'm not going to leave Kevin behind."

As if waking up from a trance, he finally began to slow down. We turned around and went back to get the photographer. We found him putt-putting along at five miles an hour in his ailing car. He was very glad to see us.

Kevin's Kurdish driver, Adnan, had raced his engine and clogged up the carburetor of his Nissan. Kevin said a nice Arab taxi driver had offered to help, but Adnan contemptuously shooed him away. He said he didn't believe any Arab could fix his car.

Adnan is a simple working-class guy. But even my translator, Tahseen, a sophisticated, upper-middle class, college-educated twenty-three-year-old, punctuates every third or fourth sentence he interprets from an Arab or Turkoman with "but he's lying" or "he's an idiot." And such bigotry does not bode well for the future of Iraq.

As the cities of northern Iraq fell to coalition forces and came under the control of Kurdish authorities, incidents of hate crimes, looting, and reprisals by newly triumphant Kurds against Arabs and Turkomans began to rise. Armed Kurds began kicking Arabs off their farms and out of their homes.

Working in Iraqi Kurdistan for three months, I had viewed Kurds as victims of history and of the more dominant ethnic groups around them. But as we towed Kevin's car back over the semidesert to Kirkuk from Tikrit, back to Kurdistan from Arabia, a vision formed in my mind's eye: of ancient mountain people on horseback raiding the villages of the flatlands below, and quickly scurrying back up to their untouchable retreats in the canyons above.

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# A TV PRODUCER'S 'BEST ASSIGNMENT'



BY CHUCK STEVENSON

It's pitch black. People are yelling through their gas masks. "Incoming!" "There's another!" "Hey, reporter guy, you still alive?" The sky is alive with molten streaks of orange. There's a distant

boom. "One just splashed," someone yells.

I'm lying painfully on my back in a dirt hole at the Iraqi bor-

## IN IRAQ, EVERYONE IS MEDIA-SAVVY

BY BORZOU DARAGAHI

his tale begins in early February in the mountains of northeastern Iraq, a few days after Secretary of State Colin Powell showed the UN Security Council — and the world — a satellite photo of what he said was a poison factory operated by Ansar al Islam, a militant band of

Islamic fighters with ties to al Qaeda.

A few of us journalists wanted to see the factory for ourselves. After a morning of negotiation, Ansar agreed to take us past their checkpoints and into the hostile terrain within the folds of the Zagros Mountains. The leaders said they wanted to show us, as representatives of the world media, that they were not manufacturing chemical weapons. It struck me at that moment how crucial a role journalists were playing in this crisis, and how media-savvy all the players were. (A Kurdish politician told me recently: "In the old days, if I had a dispute with a rival, I picked up my Kalashnikov and went to visit him. Now, I pick up the phone and call one of the international journalists in town.")

When we finally reached the site pictured in the satellite photo, the Ansar warriors let us roam about at will. The place was a horrifying dump. The residents were dirt poor. The Ansar fighters looked mean, disheveled, and somewhat confused. We tried to approach them, but the leaders would let us speak only to the designated spokesman. Each of the journalists began opening doors and drawers, and shooting roll after roll of film. It was a bonafide media circus, right

there in those wilderness mountains.

Then things really got weird. The Ansar warriors showed us the real purpose of the compound that Powell had labeled a poison factory.

It was their media headquarters.

These back-to-the-land zealots planning their Islamic revolution — high in the mountains, without electricity,

running water, or telephones — had set up a generatorpowered film production studio. There were video cameras and editing decks and miles of wiring. They had even put some of their films on a multimedia Web site, www.ansarislam.com.

One journalist swiped a pile of documents and floppy disks from a trashcan. Recipes for mustard gas and nerve agents? No. They turned out to be scripts for propaganda documentaries.

The Ansar fighters suddenly hurried us into a room. I was scared. What if they wanted us as hostages, or planned to kill us? (Indeed, later that same day, Ansar members assassinated a Kurdish leader, killing a little girl and three other civilians in the process.) Two of the Ansar leaders — Ayoub Afghani and Mohammad Hassan — sat behind a table in front of a white backdrop, with two television cameras trained on them.

It was a press conference!

In the runup to a war that would make celebrities of such spokespersons as Brigadier General Vincent Brooks and the Iraqi information minister, Mohammad Saeed Al-Sahaf, the Ansar, in their rugged, remote mountain retreat, wanted their share of the media spotlight.

"I want to set the record straight," said the bearded, wildeyed warrior, as we in the press listened obediently. "There

are no chemical weapons here."

We had come to this hideout in the hills on the chance of finding a factory turning out weapons of mass destruction. What we found instead was a studio cranking out a differ-

ent sort of wartime weaponry: propaganda.

Early in the war, after our visit, U.S. cruise missiles hit Ansar positions in northern Iraq, just days before Kurds launched a ground offensive and virtually wiped them out. The Ansar's "image war" wasn't effective enough to save it from the real thing.

der, gasping through my M40 gas mask and awkwardly twisting in my Marine-issue desert camo chem suit, heavy flak vest, and Kevlar helmet, trying to get a steady view of the sky.

I need that view right now because Iraqi missiles are incoming toward my position and I want to get them on tape. Somehow, in the dark, I've got to get my backpack open, withdraw the fancy new Panasonic DV camera in its plastic bag (a feeble attempt to armor my cameras against the sand and dust), turn the son of a bitch on, then somehow steady it, manipulate the buttons under the fluttering plastic, find the missile trails in the sky, focus on and track them, and remember to get the exposure right. And stay alive,

I also need to be thinking about my partner who is lying face down in the dirt and muttering about "the bastards." I can't keep myself from shouting. "These fuckers are trying to kill us! Where is the goddamn Air Force? I want B-52s!"

But what I'm really thinking about is how, in all this fog of war and chaos, am I going to find the best unit and the best characters for the major journalistic project I've been assigned.

I'm not a cameraman. I'm a TV producer/director for CBS News/48 Hours. I have been instructed by my always confident boss, Susan Zirinsky, 48 Hours's executive producer, to go to

Iraq and come back with a ninety-minute movie — not about the war, but about the *people* who go to war. It's the best assignment ever handed to me.

Over the years I've been a reporter and producer in Peoria, San Diego, Chicago, and Los Angeles. I've done network hard news and I've spent the last ten years making 48 Hours shows. I've been to war in Haiti and through the fires of the Los Angeles riots. I've been shot at and held at gunpoint. I have three national Emmys and a frameable letter from the television academy for nice work at Ground Zero in 2001. I've been there and done that.

But this project is flat-out cool. It's *Band of Brothers* in real time. Because of the embed rules, I'm operating like a modern-day Ernie Pyle. No cumbersome crew with lights and assistants; just a single partner. Through my long contacts with the Marines (I have been a speaker at their media training seminars for ten years), I have been embedded with that noble service.

About half of my challenge was selecting where to place myself in order to tell the best long-form story. I wasn't much concerned with the day-to-day news, CNN and Fox and the CBS embeds would deal with that. I needed to be where there

would be plenty of action, plenty of character, a real story-line, and access.

I considered focusing my camera on front-line grunts, but most of them would see action from inside the black holes of light armored vehicles. Pictures of them would be difficult to get on the long haul toward Baghdad. And when real trouble did break out, the grunts would all "button up" — close the hatches on their armored vehicles — and the only thing visible inside would be blackness and the faces of six or eight frightened young marines.

I had another thought rattling around. I had always been fascinated with the historical nexus of engineering and combat. I realized that combat engineers, despite their low profile, work alongside the front-line marines, for obvious reasons. They have to deal with obstacles that slow the advance — minefields, gullies, canals, and rivers. A good look at a military topographical map convinced me that, given the surprising amount of water in Iraq and the endless number of bridges, this would be very much an engineer's campaign.

For storytelling reasons, I needed specific missions — physical and concrete challenges. And of course I wanted spectacular visuals. Those two requirements made my choice easier. I decided to go with combat engineers who build the instant assault bridges. These marines are often at the tip of the spear.

After getting myself embedded in a unit that would be bridging to Baghdad, I felt confident I was in the right place. This would be no cushy embed. There were no public affairs people. No showers or tents or toilets. Larry Warner, my professional cameraman, and I would live as grunts, our middleaged backs hammered by the constant pounding drive toward Baghdad in dusty trucks and sleeping in dirt holes for twenty-two days.

For the central character of my 48 Hours piece, I settled on a confident young corpsman, twenty-year-old George "Doc" Silva, Jr., whose job it was to look after the medical needs of the combat engineers. He was popular with the guys and by the nature of his job, circulated constantly among them, so I met and filmed scores of the men in his unit. When it came time to build bridges, he was such a strong team player that he set aside his medical pack and helped out on those all-night construction ordeals.

I also decided to focus on a man they called "Big Country." An Alabaman, he was much older than most of the other marines — Gunnery Sergeant Mark Wendling. He had much more combat experience than anyone else and consequently was a source of calm for sometimes shaky reporters like me.

Through sandstorms, sleepless nights, and hostile threats, our team built four instant assault bridges (though some took sixteen agonizing hours to construct). The engineers had all manner of disasters and successes, and in the end, in a visual that echoed Iwo Jima, raised the Marine flag over the Tigris River south of Baghdad.

Along the way, I saw some of the horrors of war, caused either by U.S. forces or by Iraqis. I came away with a dim view of many so-called "international journalists," who so often report with their convictions rather than their eyes.

And I saw some people die who might not necessarily have been enemies. That is war — a terrible thing I hope young Americans never have to experience again.

 Chuck Stevenson is a producer for CBS News's 48 Hours Investigates

### THERE'S GERALDO, THEN THERE ARE THE REST OF US



BY JOHN LAURENCE

etting from place to place for journalists could be easy or difficult during the Iraq war — but chances are it was easier if you were Geraldo.

I discovered this two weeks into the war when I had to travel back to the rear to replace broken equipment. After twelve days and nights in the field, my sixty-three-year-

old bones were holding up in the daytime heat and near-freezing nights, but the four tape recorders and a satellite phone I had brought were inoperable. Swirling sand and powdery dust in the desert near Najaf had jammed the recorders, while the global positioning system in the Thuraya satphone could have given away the position of my unit (Third battalion, 187th regiment, 101st Airborne division), so it could not be used.

The battalion was preparing to attack the airport in Baghdad in four days so I needed to make the 350-mile trip to Kuwait City and back as quickly as possible. The battalion commander said he would trust me to keep silent about the mission — and also to bring back a box of cigars, so that the battalion staff could have a victory smoke when the war was over

Twenty-two hours later I was at the Hilton Hotel in Kuwait, having hitched rides on every available form of transportation the army provides other than armor: Humvee, truck, helicopter, gator, bus, and automobile. Part way there I heard that Geraldo Rivera of Fox News had been expelled from the 101st Airborne for violating military security on camera.

For me, getting back to the front was a complicated and frustrating affair. The public affairs office of the U.S. military would not authorize transportation for me to go north. Being unilateral rather than officially embedded, I was unaware of the unwritten rule that reporters who left their units lost the right to go back. I appealed to the colonel in charge. He had a captain call me back and tell me with cold disdain that once I left my unit, I was "disembedded" and not permitted to return. I sent an e-mail to Torie Clarke at the office of the secretary of defense in Washington. Her people said no. "Transportation resources in a combat environment — especially in the offense — are very scarce and in high demand to move food, fuel and ammunition," the reply stated.

Meanwhile, Rivera, who literally drew too many lines in the sand and identified them rather too exactly by unit name and intention, had no such problems. He was given transportation to go north again immediately (to Udairi airbase in northern Kuwait), reportedly "to make an apology."

The "scarce" transportation resources of the press center (two drivers, two military vehicles, two soldiers to ride shotgun) were made available to Rivera and his crew of three for the two-hour drive north, while hundreds of other journalists were refused permission to go there.

Upon joining the 101st on March 27, Rivera had shown up at Udairi airfield wearing a black cowboy hat, black leather jacket with a brightly-colored neck scarf, black trousers and

boots, and orange-tinted sunglasses, presumably to protect his keen reporter's eyes from the setting sun. "I've just come in from Afghanistan," he said proudly, as if to explain why he was just then arriving in the war zone. Waiting in line outside the mess tent a few minutes later, Rivera was surrounded by admiring GIs with still cameras asking for pictures with him, and autographs. "Looks like he's working the line," a reporter quipped. When asked how many pictures were being taken with himself and the troops, he replied, "At least five hundred a day. No, thousands."

David Zucchino, the veteran foreign correspondent of the *Los Angeles Times*, who was also embedded with the 101st, said to him, "Geraldo, you must be the Bob Hope of this war."

"I'd rather be thought of as the Ernie Pyle," Rivera replied. Some of the troops quickly dubbed him "Grrr-aldo," although he did not spend a night with the battalion, preferring instead the more comfortable (and more secure) surroundings of the Third Brigade command post. Rivera and his team camped in civilian tents, welcomed visiting officers who asked them to do a story about their units, and washed each other's hair with bottled water. Elsewhere that day, water was so scarce that troops in the field not far away were ordered to swallow rather than spit out the sips of water they used to brush their teeth.

There was noticeable relief among some at brigade headquarters in the area when Rivera was expelled from the 101st, having overstepped the operational boundaries other American journalists observed. A few days later, he made the same mistake of revealing future military plans while ad-libbing a report on the Fourth Infantry Division, then arriving in Kuwait to enter the war. Shortly after that, he was given permission (and transportation) to rejoin the 101st. Six other journalists and I were allowed to go along with him.

By the time I got back to the unit, the 3/187th had fought beside the Third Infantry Division and seized control of the airport, engaged the Iraqi Army for three days in buildings around the airport, and was now entering Baghdad to patrol city streets. The cigars and other supplies I brought from the rear were appreciated.

"But, Jack," the troops said when they saw me, "you missed our big fight!"

And so I had. It took another ten days to piece together the details of their airport battles. My problems getting back to the front suggest that it may not be how accurately you report the war, or how carefully you observe the rules, that gets cooperation from the Defense Department. Instead, it may be who you know and how brightly your star shines in the administration's media sky.

— John Laurence covered the war for Esquire and NPR. He is the author of The Cat from Hué: a Vietnam War Story.

### EMBEDDED/ UNEMBEDDED I



BY BOB ARNOT

he embedding process is the best single move the American military has ever made in its relations with the press. The Pentagon went from one blunder after another—the 1991 gulf war,

Grenada, Panama — to placing us inside the story. Television pictures showed why the northward advance was at times slow. Viewers at home experienced the sandstorms. You witnessed NBC's David Bloom out there getting blown around by the sand and not being able to see his hand in front of his face. In the middle of a prolonged live firefight, viewers could observe for themselves how strong the resistance was, and how the U.S. forces were trying to protect their soldiers and marines.

The first gulf war was the ultimate journalistic frustration. What's happened in Iraq is ten times better.

For me, though, the time I've spent in Baghdad after leaving my embed unit has had the greatest personal impact.

Sometimes I just go out, find an old metered cab, and drive around town, or walk around on my own. Today, a crowd was in the streets yelling and screaming because some of Saddam's police force was back on duty. I ran through the crowd with my little camera and interviewed the mullah, the sheik, the local police. While I was live on the air, an Iraqi police major and the Marine captain in charge of the U.S. effort to maintain order came along, and I was able to interview them. A man in the crowd was shouting: "Why are the U.S. Marines working with Saddam's police? These are the people who threw our relatives in jail, beat us, killed us, tortured us! How can they possibly employ these criminals?" The Iraqi policeman was hollering: "I hate this uniform! I hate everything about Saddam!"

At another location, the marines were stopping a bank robbery when along came the Iraqi police, whom the crowd booed. The police took out their guns to shoot at the crowd, and had to be restrained by marines.

The very best part about working in Baghdad is that the U.S. military hasn't yet gotten to the point of setting up a structure for dealing with the press in Baghdad — no briefings, rules,









guidelines. Briefings can be a time-waster. No PAO's — public affairs officers — no Centcom. You don't have your reports filtered a million different ways.

Elsewhere, too, when I was traveling north from Kuwait through the Iraqi desert with the Marines, we were given virtually free rein — no censorship, no attempt to listen in on what we did. We attended confidential strategy meetings. The officers were very open. On one occasion I landed in a helicopter in the middle of a firefight and there was a man and his daughter, both on stretchers.

I said, "What happened?"

A marine said: "They've been shot."

"Who shot them?" I asked.

"We did," said the marine.

A bus had been trying to crash through a roadblock and didn't stop when challenged, so the marines fired at it — then gathered up the wounded and put them in helicopters for a trip to a hospital near Kuwait, thus saving their lives. For me, it was an illuminating moment.

— Bob Arnot is a correspondent for MSNBC and NBC News.

### EMBEDDED/ UNEMBEDDED II

BY JOHN BURNETT

n the fifth day of the war, a convoy carrying the headquarters battalion of the First Marine Division moved deeper into Iraq. Five reporters riding in the back of a seven-ton cargo truck were told to lie flat and wear body armor and Kevlar helmets because of snipers. After the twenty-seventh

hour, the truck wheezed to a halt in the middle of the sandstorm from hell. The air filled with so much blowing dirt it blotted out the sun. We staggered through the gloaming into our tent just in time for the rainstorm, which turned the desert into the consistency of cheese casserole.

That was only the beginning of my monthlong embed with the U.S. Marines. When we opened our laptops and tried to write stories at night, the gunnery sergeant would bellow, "Turn that fucking light out before you get your grape shot!" In Marine-speak, a grape is a head, and there was constant concern that snipers would shoot at any light source in our camp. We overcame. The colonel finally let us use the chaplain's tent as a filing center at night. Soon I could unpack and set up a Nera satellite phone and file an entire piece to *All Things Considered* in the dark.

In the end, though, the inconveniences of working in a combat zone proved less frustrating than the embed process itself. Embedding was, for me, a flawed experiment that served the purposes of the military more than it served the cause of balanced journalism.

The Pentagon developed the embed system partly in response to the media's desire for front-row access to the war. But during my travels with the Marines, I couldn't shake the sense that we were cheerleaders on the team bus. Major General James Mattis said as much in his opening comments to the ninety-five reporters who would be covering his divi-



sion, quoting the Greek poet Pindar: "Unsung, the noblest deed will die, and we're going to do a noble deed here."

Much of the Marine command that I met saw us, not as neutral journalists who had a job to do, but as instruments to reflect the accomplishments and glory of the United States Marine Corps. A press officer leaned back in the chow hall one day and scanned a color spread in *Time* on marines preparing for battle. "Money can't buy this kind of recruitment campaign," he said.

The Marines lived up to their pledge not to tamper with our coverage. But reporting mishaps could come at a price. On March 24, Joseph Eddins, Jr., chief photographer for *The Washington Times*, happened on the aftermath of an accident in which two marines drowned after reportedly being ordered to swim the Saddam Canal in full battle gear. Two days later, the newspaper quoted Eddins as saying the marines had, in fact, attempted to cross the canal without a safety line. After that, Eddins says, "I was effectively blackballed." The commanders of the group to which he was assigned froze him out, and he eventually joined a different unit.

The single most common criticism I heard from my embedded colleagues during the war was the lack of mobility. The veteran defense correspondent George Wilson, who covered the Vietnam War for The Washington Post and now writes for National Journal, spent a week chronicling a Marine artillery gun crew. It was a rich story, he said, but ultimately frustrating. "We would see a shell go downrange. But we had no way to find out what it hit." Without our own transportation or translators, embedded reporters lived exclusively within the reality of the U.S. military. In briefings, we were told about targets destroyed, territory claimed, and enemy soldiers surrendering. My reaction was the same as it is on any other story: if your mother says she loves you, check it out. The inability to verify the military's version of the war made for one-sided reporting. My editor has since told me that our coverage sounded more balanced than I was aware of. For instance, after a general announced to the press scrum in Doha, Qatar, that there were no delays in the supply train, I was able to say on the air that the men in our battalion were down to one meal day.

A week after Baghdad fell, I officially "out-bedded," and began to learn about the war that had been inaccessible to embedded reporters. Traveling with a driver and translator, I

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stumbled onto the village of Taniya, twenty-five miles southeast of Baghdad. Early on the morning of April 2, U.S. bombs accidentally killed thirty-one civilians as they slept in their beds. After researching the incident, Central Command confirmed to me that F-15 Strike Eagles had dropped 500-pound, precision-guided bombs during that morning "on tanks and tracked vehicles in the area." A spokesman said that after-mission reports mentioned no missed targets. The grieving families of Al-Taniya had a radically different version from Centeom's official account.

"Here there is nothing to bomb," a distraught local man named Salem Abda told me. "We ask Bush, why did he bomb us? Are there weapons, tanks, soldiers, fedayeen? No. There is nothing here, not even food."

I'm not suggesting we should have embedded American journalists with the fedayeen. But the idea of allowing some reporters to have their own vehicles on the battlefield was not out of the question. In retrospect, a Marine PAO Captain, Joe Plenzler, acknowledges: "In the future, I'd recommend the media bring their own four-wheel drives, their own diesel, and travel like lampreys under a shark, under the protection of the Marines."

Some "unilaterals" did travel with the troops in their own vehicles, but there was little aggressive, independent reporting because they were afraid of losing their place, or of the military denying them food and fuel.

On the positive side, embedding with the troops allowed us to tell remarkable stories from the trenches. There were the musicians of the First Marine Division Band, who traded their trumpets and tubas for heavy machine guns and stood watch day and night, in sandstorms and searing sun. And there was Lieutenant Oscar Rodriguez Jr., who, the day our Humvee was ambushed, leaped out of his seat with only his 9 mm pistol and charged at the building in which six fedayeen snipers were hiding, leading to their capture.

"I'm concerned about one-sidedness," said Byron Harris, a reporter with WFAA-TV in Dallas, embedded with a combat service support unit, "but I don't think Americans understand how hard marines' lives are. We were able to tell that story. Maybe once they do, Americans won't be so frivolous about getting us involved in foreign wars."

John Burnett is Southwest correspondent for NPR.

## THE SOUNDTRACK FOR WAR



#### BY NICHOLAS ENGSTROM

avid Graupner's company, TM Century, creates news-music packages for talk radio stations across the country and the worldwide Armed Forces Radio Network, Stations buy music from TM, Graupner explains, because they need to "stand out" in an era when news is blandly similar. "The trouble with the news," he says, "is that everybody's reading from the same script." TM's latest attempt at distinction is luggernaut, an aggressive and at times overtly militaristic music package that was completed in December under the assumption that within six months there would be either a war or another major terrorist attack on American soil, Graupner says Juggernaut reflects how drastically news music has changed in the last few years. "I've got two words for you: Fox News. I'd be a bald-faced liar if I said Juggernaut wasn't inspired by what you hear on that channel."

Five days before the war with Iraq began, I visited Fox News headquarters to pick up a CD labeled "Liberation Iraq Music," containing what was to be the theme music for the war coverage. The Fox theme could be Metallica rehearsing Wagner, the guitar chords rising over thudding drums. It seemed ready-made for *Apocalypse Now*, when helicopters blare *The Flight of the Valkyries* from mounted speakers as they swoop down on a Vietcong-held village. Would the coverage fit this music?

#### PAST AND PRESENT

Television news music and sound effects announce that the news is on, create brand recognition, and provide "emotional fortification of the content of the news," says the composer Bob Israel, who has created music for ABC and CNN.

But the early strains of music on TV were subtle. In 1959 the pioneer producer Fred Friendly chose Aaron Copeland's version of the hymn Simple Gifts, from his ballet Appalachian Spring, to accompany the new news documentary CBS Reports. It was a bold move at a time when news was considered sacrosanct. not to be infected by the world of entertainment, In 1961 Richard Salant, then president of CBS News, banned all music from any program bearing the CBS News imprint. But on NBC, when Huntley and Brinkley switched to a halfhour nightly broadcast in 1963, the producer Reuven Frank decided to finish each show with a piece from the second movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Frank defends adding music. 'The teletype opening of Cronkite's show was used as music. It was no less artificial than the music we were using."

Lawrence Grossman, former president of NBC News, who hired the film composer John Williams for the signature theme for the Nightly News in 1985, maintains that the evolution of news music is reflected in the changing technology and the relationship between music and graphics. When he started in TV news, crews edited news reports on film stock, prompting fewer edits and a slower visual pace. Today's technology allows split-second cuts, freeze frames, multi-angle shots. "The music you hear today matches and reflects the visual manipulation," Grossman says. "The big issue from my perspective is when the music hypes the emotionalism of the scene. That was a no-no in my day." The sound effects on the cable channels, he argues, "tell you what to think."

After Richard Salant left CBS in 1979, his conviction that news and entertainment shouldn't mix persisted, influencing the network's new guard. Among them was Eric Shapiro, the current director of the CBS Evening News. "When you get used to a policy like Dick's, and then you start to add music, it sounds strange and inappropriate," he says. "We are serious journalists. If there were a difficult decision to use music or not to use music, I would back off."

The scores introducing each of the broadcast networks' nightly news programs for more than fifteen years (NBC since 1985, ABC since 1978, CBS since the late 1980s) are similar enough in style to create a news-theme recipe, according to the Juilliard faculty member Bruce Brubaker, who adds that "because they are so grandiloquent, they would be very easy to parody." He points out that all three belong to a singular musical category: the fanfare. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the cavalry played regimental fanfares with outdoor instruments such as horns and drums, the prominent instruments in the network news programs. But the fanfare developed as its own genre in the context of the military parade. Brubaker says, "Why is it so fun to march up and down the street? Because we can see how powerful we are, that if there were to be a battle, we would be able to beat our enemy."

Score Productions has created music for TV since 1963, when Bob Israel left his post as the music producer for David Susskind's Talent Associates and founded his own company. He has created most of the music on ABC News, in-

SER LENGTHWITTHMICH WATHERD

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The National Press Foundation would like to thank the journalists and speakers who participated in the Covering Business and Economics 2003 seminar, held April 27-30 in Washington, D.C. They made it a success. The journalist-fellows were:

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The seminar, which provided both the basics of business coverage and an overview of current issues, was one in the continuing series of topic-based seminars conducted by the National Press Foundation. For information on coming programs, check the web site at www.nationalpress.org

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### 'I put in more tom-tom drums because they had more urgency. I wanted it to sound like, I don't want to say war drums, but . . .'

— Fox News's Richard O'Brien

cluding the signature theme for ABC World News Tonight with Peter Jennings and special news music for the first gulf war, as well as themes on CNN. "I decided long ago that the most important element in music on TV is an identifiable theme that people can hum," he says. "That idea has given way to snippets similar to pop music, something I didn't have to deal with when I started." Israel, like Grossman and Frank, bristles at the sound effects on cable news. "It's a Catch-22," he says, "because once you give in to that it never ends. You're going to always be changing your format to make it more enticing, more frenetic."

As we talked in his cluttered office on East Forty-ninth Street, ambient music came from the recording studio directly above us. I wondered if ABC had contacted him to score the coming war, and Israel told me that that's exactly what I'd been hearing through the ceiling. "It will be primarily electronic. I know it sounds a little lugubrious and strange." It did. He called upstairs to ask his colleague, Gary, if I could come listen to the work in progress, but the answer was no, and after Israel hung up the phone, the moody soundscapes ceased. The business of making a soundtrack for war news, Israel noted, "sounds a little crass, but that's what you have to do in this business to be prepared."

#### SOUND OF THE FUTURE?

Fox News's ascent to the top of the cable news heap has sent the rest of television news scrambling to figure out the secret of its success. Richard O'Brien, Fox News's creative director, sounds as confident as his channel sounds on the air. "The people running the networks are a bunch of arrogant journalists," he says. "Their style is so anaesthetized. Here, nothing's sacred. We're constantly changing our look and sound, because we're constantly copied."

The Fox Report with Shepard Smith, the network's 7 P.M. program, may be the best example of the channel's signature, aggressive style. Sound effects, called "whooshes," pepper the hour-long program. I counted twenty-eight of them

on the April 10 show. The segment "Around the World in 80 Seconds" features international tidbits with a timer counting down from eighty, underscored by an extremely rapid synthesizer jingle. Smith delivers the news in clipped sentences, as if he's conversing with the sound effects and has to rush before they interrupt him. In a June 27, 2001, interview on PBS's NewsHour with Jim Lehrer, Smith said, "Some items don't need a bunch of me babbling on. Some items need a sound effect and a move to the next story."

O'Brien chooses music that jolts him. He recently heard a choral arrangement, realized he had never heard such a thing on a news network, and attached the chorus to the Fox news theme. "Hearing such a high sound will make anyone in a room instinctively turn around and look," he says.

The Metallica/Wagner war score, he contends, is "uplifting," but "with a marching feel. The theme is guttural. We didn't want to trivialize the situation. But we wanted the music to say, 'Something big is coming this way.'"

O'Brien said before the war that music wouldn't be used until after the initial "shock and awe" gave way to analysis. "When the war starts, it's going to be all about the video, it doesn't need prettying up," he says. "After a few days, when there is not as much going on, the animation and the sound effects will start creeping in again."

As it happened, the first couple of days were less visually dramatic than anticipated. By the first weekend the news channels had shed their inhibitions about inserting a musical garnish.

CBS was the only broadcast network to completely change its signature theme, introducing Dan Rather to an aggressive drumbeat with a reverberating bass guitar. The music on cable news channels, meanwhile, all had the tone of crisis. On MSNBC, nerve-wracking strings, drums, and tolling bells ushered in war updates every fifteen minutes. CNN's theme was nearly identical to MSNBC'S, minus the bells. Fox News's war theme was the tune I had previewed, but with more percussion and milder

strings replacing the heavy guitar. O'Brien explained: "I nixed that first version because it was too shrill, too rock 'n' roll. I put in more tom-tom drums because they had more urgency. I wanted it to sound like, I don't want to say war drums, but ...."

ithin the first two weeks of war, music critics at The Philadelphia Inquirer and the Chicago Tribune wrote articles on the ideological impact of the TV news war music, respectively headlined MEDIA'S WAR MUSIC CARRIES A MESSAGE and NET-WORKS' THEME MUSIC SANITIZES WAR'S DARKEST REALITIES. The martial style of the music was criticized. But this style didn't materialize with the war. War exposed the trend. The cable channels were imitating Fox News before the war, but once the fighting started, Fox ramped up its operation and distanced itself from its competitors. Indeed, the lack of music and sound effects in the war's first few days - in deference to the gravity of the situation — soon proved untenable (even unnatural) considering the modern viewer's expectations.

As an alternative to sound effects, the two old-guard producers I spoke with, Reuven Frank and Lawrence Grossman, had mentioned the simple emotional power of natural sound. According to Frank, having no sound at all with an image "distorts the understanding of the news content" as much as sound effects might. The best NBC coverage of the days following John Kennedy's assassination, he says, occurred on Saturday night, when Kennedy's body was on display in the Capitol Rotunda. The only sound was of feet shuffling past the casket.

We didn't hear much natural sound in this televised war. The stationary camera shots of the same buildings in Baghdad had no attendant sound, so the effect was of a security camera. The anchors and the military analysts spoke for the images. The reports of "embeds" were sometimes unintentionally most interesting not only for what they said, but also for the sound of the background — the dust storms and the grinding tanks. This became readily apparent on National Public Radio, but was missed on television. Television looked for the war but did not listen to it.

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# 'ANY WORD?'

# HOW NEWSDAY GOT ITS JOURNALISTS OUT OF SADDAM'S PRISON

BY DELE OLOJEDE

#### DAY ONE, MONDAY, MARCH 24: MISSING

The last contact I had with Matt McAllester was around 1:40 p.m. Eastern Time, by e-mail, informing me that he planned to file two stories later that day — one on an appearance on Iraqi TV by Saddam Hussein, and the other about the U.S. bombing of a residential complex in downtown Baghdad. The promised stories never came.

Matt, who completed a four-year assignment last year as our Middle East bureau chief, was covering the war in Baghdad, along with Moises Saman, a staff photographer. Both of them had by now spent a month in the Iraqi capital, evading meddlesome officials as best they could, hiding their satellite phones and other equipment in multiple places. While they had backup rooms in other hotels around town, they were on this day ensconced in Room 1122 at the Palestine International Hotel.

They never called, so by 10 P.M. we decided to substitute a Baghdad file by John Daniszewski of the Los Angeles Times, a newspaper owned, like Newsday, by the Tribune Company. I sent a note to John's editor, Marjorie Miller, to ask if John, who also was staying at the Palestine, would go knock on Matt and Moises's door.

During the course of the evening, Tony Marro, our editor, checked repeatedly with me, striding across the newsroom to ask, "Any word?" I reassured him that there was no cause for alarm, that in all likelihood they had been caught on the wrong side of town during another night of heavy American bombing, and probably had judged it unsafe to try to get back to their hotel and their satellite phones.

I also told Tony that Matt and I had an understanding that during the war, there might be times when he unavoidably would fail to get in touch for a couple of days, and that it should not necessarily create any undue aggravation. In fact, the same thing already had happened with some of our reporters embedded with Army and Marine units. Upon crossing the border from Kuwait into Iraq at the start of the war, some of them were prohibited from using their satellite phones and had maintained radio silence for up to two days.

Tony had reason to be concerned. He had made the decision to keep Matt and Moises in Baghdad even as other news organizations decided to pull their correspondents out. President Bush, after all, had specifically given journalists and others forty-eight hours to get out of Baghdad. The Tribune Company was concerned about the advisability of keeping reporters in Baghdad, as was Ray Jansen, our publisher.

Fearing a stampede as some of his colleagues were yanked out of the Iraqi capital, Matt had sent me an e-mail at home on Sunday, March 16, asking that he be allowed to stay:

FREE AT LAST: Free-lance photographer Johan Rydeng Spanner, Newsday photographer Moises Saman, Newsday's deputy foreign editor, James Rupert, free-lance photographer Molly Bingham, and Newsday reporter Matthew McAllester at an April 2 press conference in Amman, Jordan.

AP PHOTO/DAVID GUTTENFEIDE

I wanted to drop you a note about safety because you'll likely wake up to the news that the Tribune and, it looks like, the WPost are pulling out of here. Others are leaving too - some TV, some Brits. I fear a domino effect . . . . We are hourly calculating safety matters but we continue to feel committed to being here. I could go into a long detailed explanation of all the myriad factors and calculations but I think the point is simpler. We are journalists who cover these sorts of situations and risk is part of it. There is risk in every conflict and sometimes journalists pay the price, as some might here. I wouldn't be doing this job if I hadn't thought long and hard about all this. I have a firm intention of passing away in my rocking chair with my grandkids around me, as does Moises. But we're passionately committed to our jobs and this story. If we are pulled out, the story will be left to the embeds and the U.S. government.

Two days after that, as editors huddled around my speakerphone, Tony methodically grilled Matt and Moises about their situation, their motivation, and their preparedness. Finally, he asked how Matt might react if he were to be ordered out.

"Very, very disappointed," Matt replied in a firm but respectful voice, leaving no doubt that this was an understatement. We signed off. Another quick meeting in Tony's office, and the decision was made, unanimously. They could stay.

That was on Tuesday, March 18. The next day, bombs began dropping over Baghdad.

#### DAY TWO, TUESDAY, MARCH 25: CONCERN

My cell phone rang shortly after 6 A.M. "Any word?" Tony Marro asked. I said not so far, and proceeded to tell him that I had sent e-mail messages to the Los Angeles Times's Daniszewski and to Larry Kaplow, a correspondent for Cox newspapers and a close friend of Matt.

We were getting mildly concerned. It was well into the day in Baghdad, eight hours ahead, and still no word. But we also reasoned that if something horrible had occurred, we would have heard by now, and in that sense no news could be good news.

Around 9:30, Jim Dooley, our photo editor, played back a voicemail that had been left for him earlier that morning by Tyler Hicks, *The New York Times*'s photographer in Baghdad:

I imagine you are probably aware that Matt McAllester and Moises Saman have — I'm not sure exactly what happened, but they are no longer at the Palestine Hotel. I saw them as of last night, both of them . . . Everything was okay. And today their room is empty. There have been a lot of expulsions overnight. People are being taken to Syria. We think they may have been among that group of people, although we haven't had any contact with them.

Jim Dooley and I began a round of calls, trying to reach reporters in Baghdad. A couple of hours later I received a response from Kaplow, who confirmed what Hicks had said and speculated that Iraqi security had been conducting a sweep of people who came into Baghdad on tourist or limited-use visas. Daniszewski also sent me an email saying he had spoken to a senior Iraqi information ministry official, who told him ten people were being expelled because their visas were not in order. The official said the ministry was arranging taxis to take them to the Jordanian border, and they would be accompanied by two officials from the information ministry.

On this day a ferocious sandstorm

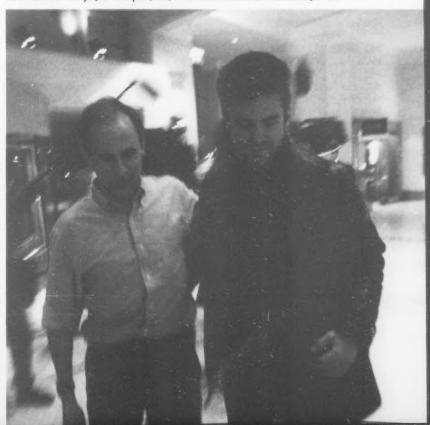
had blown in from the desert, and much of Iraq was blanketed. Visibility was poor and even U.S. forces heading north toward Baghdad were bogged down in central Iraq.

Though some of the details were contradictory, we were receiving much the same information from other sources, most notably the indefatigable Joel Simon of the Committee to Protect Journalists, who had been in constant touch with other reporters in Baghdad, including Jon Lee Anderson of *The New Yorker*. By now we had been told that lraqi officials had grabbed Matt and Moises, along with an uncertain number of other journalists and peace activists, and were expelling them either to Jordan or to Syria.

We were frustrated that our people had been expelled while those from *The New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times* had been left behind. But now, at least, we thought they were okay and would call us as soon as they were able to cross into Syria or Jordan.

Nonetheless, an undercurrent of anxiety ran through the newsroom. I was getting a steady stream of messages from Tim Phelps, our Washington bureau chief and my predecessor as foreign edi-

REUNION: Newsday's James Rupert, left, welcomes Matthew McAllester in Jordan.





UP CLOSE: In a photo by Moises Saman, Iraqis scour the banks of the Tigris for a U.S. pilot rumored to have been shot down.

tor, who was close to Matt and had sent him on his first foreign assignments. Tony Marro strode into my office at least seventeen times during the course of the day, and finally he closed the door and said, "I hope you don't mind that I'm very nervous about this."

### DAY THREE, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26: ANXIETY

Still no word. The sandstorm was worse than ever, and conditions were so bad that Larry Kaplow reported in an e-mail from Baghdad that it was "raining mud." By now I was getting used to receiving a call from Marro at midnight and again at 6 A.M. We were beginning to get more information out of Baghdad. Marjorie Miller, the Los Angeles Times's foreign editor, sent me a note saying she had been able to get through to an Iraqi information ministry official in Baghdad, who assured her that Matt and Moises and the others were safe and were being expelled for visa reasons.

Although Matt had been on assignment in Iraq several times — the last being in October, with Moises — they had been unable to obtain regular journalist visas on this trip. As war became imminent, and he and Moises grew increasingly anxious that they might not get in, they had asked my permission to do what many other journalists did: they got in on a visa issued to a group of

peace activists, popularly called "human shields." The visa clearly identified them as journalists, and the understanding was that they would cover the activities of the human shields. After an obligatory first story on the human shields, they had gone about the business of covering Baghdad, and the day before they were finally arrested, a month after they arrived in Baghdad, they had been issued regular press permits by the information ministry.

Now, the third day after we lost contact with them, I got the first full account of what their colleagues in Baghdad thought might have happened. The source was Matt's friend, Kaplow, who would soon assume the role of our most important contact in Baghdad throughout the crisis.

Kaplow reported that the bus supposedly taking the detainees to the border apparently never left town Tuesday, possibly because of terrible weather conditions, but was believed to have departed this morning. No one, however, could say for sure. Kaplow also had talked to an Italian free-lance photographer named Marco DiLauro, the last person to see Matt and Moises in their room on Monday night Baghdad time, as they prepared to send their stories and pictures for the day. DiLauro said they were relaxed and their room was filled with several hundred pounds of equipment,

and that there was no way the room could suddenly have been stripped clean by the following morning unless they'd been arrested by the security police.

This was how we began to get the first inkling that they might have been arrested by the security police, and not ministry of information officials. We also had been told by then that the security police had taken Molly Bingham, a free-lance photographer, that same night from the room she shared with Nathan Thayer, a free-lance journalist on assignment for Esquire. Thaver had witnessed the arrest, and reported that Molly's notebooks had been packed away in plastic bags. We heard that another free-lance photographer, Johan Spanner, a Dane, had also been seized, as had Philip Latasa, a human shield from Virginia.

At this point, all the information we had still pointed to their expulsion, although we weren't sure. We began to reach out to other institutions, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the papal nuncio in Baghdad. Tim Phelps had contacted the Pentagon to tell them that Matt and Moises were missing. Craig Gordon, our correspondent in Doha, Qatar, contacted the U.S. Central Command.

We were starving for real information, and we needed to head off rumors in the newsroom. In midafternoon Tony Marro sent a note to the staff, saying we had had no contact with Matt and Moises since Monday, and we were working hard to find out what had happened to them and why. That same afternoon, I received a call from an old friend, Bill Spindle of *The Wall Street Journal*. Bill was Daniel Pearl's editor when the *Journal* reporter was abducted and murdered by terrorists in Pakistan, almost exactly a year before. "I know what you're going through," he said, and wished me luck.

It was the first time I felt a slight trepidation, and I fought to conceal my emotions by taking a quick walk down the hall. I promised myself that I would betray no sense of panic to my bosses and to the newsroom, and at all cost maintain a serious but cheerful disposition.

#### DAY FOUR, THURSDAY, MARCH 27: CODE ORANGE

If we didn't hear from Matt and Moises this morning, deputy managing editor Les Payne had told Marro in an early phone conversation, we were facing a serious situation. We could no longer assume that our people were on a bus out of the country.

We began to press forward on a number of fronts — getting as much information as we could out of Baghdad, getting messages to the Red Cross, Doctors Without Borders, and other nongovernmental organizations. We contacted diplomatic missions still open in Baghdad, particularly those likely to be looked upon favorably by the Iraqi regime, such as the Vatican's and Russia's, and we contacted individuals who we thought could have lines into the Iraqi regime.

By now Kaplow's editors had told him that he could spend as much time as he needed on helping us locate his friend, and he began to file detailed reports on whatever he could pick up out of Baghdad. Our reporter, Mohamad Bazzi, then in northern Iraq, was suggesting useful contacts in the Arab world as well as back here. Other staff members started spending most of their time helping. Lauren Terrazzano, a reporter, and Adrian Peracchio, a member of the editorial board, who speak Italian, were assigned to talk to the papal nuncio.

Tony Marro and managing editor Charlotte Hall started giving dozens of interviews, essentially saying that two of our people were missing in Baghdad. The constant trooping of TV camera crews created a sense of heightened anxiety in the newsroom. A couple of reporters showed up at my office door, seeking information that I didn't have. Some people were beginning to cry.

That night, Les Payne offered to buy me a drink. We sat at a bar not far from Newsday's offices on Long Island, We have a serious crisis here, he said, and in so many words said he was relieving me of my duties as the editor in charge of our war coverage. He said he felt I needed to continue to spend all my time coordinating efforts to locate Matt and Moises. He wanted to bring up Tim Phelps from Washington to take over the editing. Other correspondents on the war front needed attentive editors experienced in foreign reporting, he said; just that day, one of them, Letta Tayler, had been shot at by Iraqi irregulars fighting U.S. Marines in central Iraq. Early the next morning Les proposed the change to Marro, and Phelps was on the 11 A.M. shuttle.

#### DAY FIVE. FRIDAY. MARCH 28: CODE RED

At 7:16 A.M., Tim Phelps forwarded an email he had received from a European peace activist in Amman, Jordan, who was one of the coordinators of the human shields program. The activist, Johan Groeneveld, said his colleagues in Damascus had confirmed the arrival in Syria of Molly Bingham, Johan Spanner, and Philip Latasa. No word of Matt and Moises.

We were excited by the news, because this meant we had people to debrief who could give us firsthand information about Matt and Moises. I asked my deputy, Jim Rupert, then on assignment in Amman, to track the three down in Syria. But this eventually turned out to be a wild goose chase. No one had arrived in Syria. It was one of several false alarms. Perhaps the most serious sounded later in the day, when I received a call from Arthur Green of the State Department's Iraq Task Force, who said he had happy news: Our guys had been released and confirmed to have crossed the border into Syria.

I felt a sudden rush of blood to the head and barely held back from yelling in jubilation. I asked instead how the State Department received this confirmation. Green said that the press attacké at the U.S. embassy in Amman had passed on the information. By now it was around 2 A.M. Saturday in the Jordanian capital, and I called the duty officer at the embassy, who told me that the wonderful news came from none other than a reporter, Lisa Barron, of CBS

Radio in Amman. My heart sank when I talked to Barron, who apologetically said "someone" had told her that Newsday had confirmed reestablishing contact with their guys, and she had dutifully passed it on to the press attaché at the embassy, Justin Siberell, who in turn had reported it to the State Department, which then passed it on to me. It was all I could do to keep from screaming in frustration.

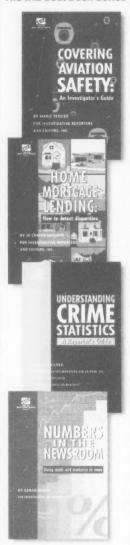
We had begun to operate in full crisis mode. The crisis management team consisted of Tony, Charlotte, Les, Lonnie Isabel, an assistant managing editor, Tim, and myself. The day before, Tony had contacted the Catholic bishop of Long Island, William Murphy, who, it turned out, was an old friend of the papal nuncio in Baghdad, and he spoke to the bishop again. I contacted the Iraqi ambassador to the United Nations, Mohammed al-Durri, and he promised to send urgent messages to Baghdad — though he said communicating with his government had become difficult, since U.S. planes just that morning had destroyed the telecommunications tower in the Iraqi capital. I also met with Ramsey Clark, the former U.S. attorney general, in his law offices in New York, to ask his help in opening lines to senior Iraqi leaders, particularly Tariq Aziz, with whom he had maintained a cordial relationship. He said he would make preliminary inquiries, and if no progress had been made by the weekend, he would write formally to Aziz and other officials.

Also on this day, Marco DiLauro, the Italian photographer, and Nate Thayer, Molly Bingham's roommate in Baghdad, were both expelled from Iraq. They also had been in the country on visitor's or human-shield-related visas. As they crossed the border into Jordan, DiLauro—the last person to see our guys—called me by satellite phone and we spoke briefly of what he knew. I then alerted Jim Rupert in Amman to get ready to debrief both men as soon as they arrived in the Jordanian capital.

Rupert's detailed conversation, the results of which he relayed to me later in the day, caused us a measure of alarm. Thayer described to him the demeanor of the Iraqi security men, who as it turned out were from the feared Mukhabarat, Hussein's secret police. Di-Lauro described in detail the atmosphere in Matt and Moises's room on the night of their disappearance. More important, he gave us the first full account of the central role that the illegal use of



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IRE MEMBERS: \$15 each NON-MEMBERS: \$25 each Plus Postage: First Class - \$4 for the first book, \$2 for each additional book satellite phones might have played in their arrest. He described the heightened state of paranoia in the besieged capital, and he made clear that our men were without question in the hands of the secret police, who likely believed them to be spies. Matt is a British citizen, Moises a Spaniard, both working for an American newspaper, and as Matt would later describe it, "We formed our own little axis of evil."

"We have to prepare for the worst," Jim Rupert said, adding that at all cost we had to get them out before the regime collapsed.

It was a grim evening. Phelps, who had been our correspondent in the Middle East through the first gulf war and is one of the most knowledgeable people on our staff about the region, said this was now much bigger than *Newsday* and we had to seek help more widely. We concluded that Syrian officials could be crucial, and decided to pull Mohamad Bazzi, who has wide contacts in Damascus, out of northern Iraq.

We were talking to anyone who could reach senior Iraqi leaders. I suggested we should contact the former Russian prime minister, Yevgeny Primakov, who was extremely close to Iraqi leaders. We asked our Moscow correspondent, Liam Pleven, to return to base from Paris, where he had been covering the antiwar movement. Later, as we tried to figure out who could reach out to Primakov on our behalf, someone floated Henry Kissinger's name, at which Les Payne said, "I'll have to abstain on that one."

#### DAY SIX, SATURDAY, MARCH 29: SCRAMBLING

Tony Marro met Ray Jansen, the *Newsday* publisher, outside All Weather Tire in Huntington Station, Long Island, not far from where they both lived. Tony gave Ray the grim accounting, particularly that we now believed Matt and Moises were being held by the Mukhabarat on suspicion of spying. "Oooohhh shit!" Jansen said. The publisher agreed that it might be a good idea for him to hit the road to Damascus, to personally seek help from Syrian leaders. I would accompany him. Tony did not immediately tell him that he might have to travel with a suitcase filled with cash.

Josh Friedman, a former *Newsday* reporter who serves on the board of the Committee to Protect Journalists, had suggested contacting Arab media, including al-Jazeera, to get the word out. We drafted talking points to create a consistent message. The most important of these were that Matt and Moises were *Newsday* staff journalists, that they were assigned by *Newsday* to cover the war and its impact on the Iraqi people, and that they were in Baghdad for no other reason. Charlotte Hall became the public face of *Newsday*, giving the bulk of interviews, drafting press releases, and

managing the creation of a Web site for the missing journalists, including their biographies and highlights of their past work, particularly in Arab and Muslim lands.

We had been in touch with Matt's and Moises's families, in Britain and Spain, all week. But by Saturday, Janey McAllester, Matt's sister, who lives in London, was demanding to know just what the hell was going on. Tony and I began talking to family members constantly, and we assigned one of our reporters, Bart Jones, who is fluent in Spanish, to serve as the contact for Moises's parents, who live in Barcelona.

While covering events leading to the first gulf war, Tim Phelps had covered Jesse Jackson's successful effort to gain the release of U.S. and Kuwaiti captives from Iraqi officials then occupying Kuwait. He now suggested that perhaps Jackson could help. The next day Janey McAllester called Jackson, who immediately agreed.

### DAY SEVEN, SUNDAY MARCH 30: 'MOISES IS PALESTINIAN!'

I awoke to a breathless e-mail from Rupert in Amman, headed: "Moises is Palestinian!" Rupert had received information from Sufian Taha, our news assistant on the West Bank, who said that while Moises was on assignment on the West Bank with Matt before the Afghan war of 2001, he had tried to track down his relatives in the Palestinian village of Beit Jala. Rupert recognized the importance of Moises's background right away, and he copied this message to Larry Kaplow in Baghdad, asking him to get it within earshot of the appropriate Iraqi officials.

Phelps ran into Payne in the *Newsday* parking lot this Sunday morning and he could barely contain himself. "Saddam Hussein cannot hold a Palestinian in prison! He just cannot hold a Palestinian in prison!"

He could, however. As we would later find out, Hussein was holding and torturing many of them in the vast Abu Ghraib prison outside Baghdad, where unbeknownst to us at the time, Matt and Moises also were being held. But at the time we were happy to get any positive piece of information, and this was a big one, not least because we could now gain the attention of Palestinian leaders, who had good contacts in Baghdad.

As it happens, Moises's grandfather, Hanan Saman Hanna Nozrala, had emigrated from Beit Jala to Lima, Peru, in 1912, at the age of twenty-five, and had married a local woman. Moises's father, also Moises Saman, was born there, as was Moises, before his parents moved to Barcelona. And so, with Rupert coordinating from Amman, we sent Sufian Taha and our reporter, Andrew Metz, then temporarily assigned to Jerusalem, to comb the streets of

nearby Beit Jala for the Samans. We contacted Al Ouds, the major Palestinian newspaper, which promptly did a page-two story on the son of Beit Jala and his colleague, believed to be held by the Iragis. We also started knocking on the doors of Palestinian leaders. We published fresh profiles of the missing two in Newsday. We put family members on television, along with Charlotte. We began fielding an avalanche of calls from news organizations all over the world, from Peru to Britain, the Middle East to Spain.

Through Stephen Hindy, president of Brooklyn Brewery and a former deputy foreign editor at Newsday, we contacted Edward Abington, the former U.S. consul general in lerusalem, who represents the interests of the Palestinian National Authority in Washington. Abington called Yasir Arafat for help, and over the next twenty-four hours, one of Arafat's top aides, an Iragi-Palestinian who had served as Arafat's ambassador to Baghdad, would talk repeatedly to key Iraqi leaders. We had now achieved "motion and commotion," as advised by Judith Kipper of the Council on Foreign Relations, who had assisted CBS News in securing the release of its reporter Bob Simon from Iraq in 1991.

Before I turned in for the night I sent an email to John Daniszewski of the Los Angeles Times in Baghdad. It bothered me that we still had no official confirmation from the Iraqis that they were holding our men. I urged John to throw even more effort into the task, if that were at all possible. In the morning I received a reply from John: "I am so sorry I do not have any good news to send you. My personal sense is that Matt and Moises and the other three are being held by some organ that the normal government bodies don't want to mess with . . . . I am really sorry to share these grim thoughts with you. If I had to bet, I still would put my money that they are here in Baghdad but caught in some sort of Kafkaesque knot."

#### DAY EIGHT, MONDAY, MARCH 31: CONTACT

Several crucial things happened, almost simultaneously.

A Jordanian source with good contacts in Baghdad confirmed that Matt and Moises were being held by the Mukhabarat.

The papal nuncio in Baghdad told us he got messages through to Iraqi cabinet ministers.

After that morning's press conference, Larry Kaplow delivered an appeal signed by several other correspondents to the foreign minister, Naji Sabri.

Ramsey Clark called to say he had delivered letters to Baghdad, and he counseled a change in tactic: we had been saying we believed Matt and Moises were being held by Iraqi authorities. He said it was better to say that they were missing, and we were asking the help of Iraqi | Dele Olojede is the foreign editor of Newsday.

authorities in locating them. This was an important distinction, he said, because we did not want to back them into a corner. He said many senior Iraqi leaders believed they would never leave the city alive, as American forces pressed in from all sides, and that as much as we loved our correspondents, in the circumstances their safety might not mean very much to people who now believed they themselves were going to die. We quickly revised our talking points accordingly.

Throughout the day I made preparations for the proposed trip the publisher and I were to make to Damascus. We continued to contact other people for help, Jansen signed letters to Primakov and to Syrian leaders. Near midnight, Les, Lonnie, Tim, and I gathered at a nearby bar, handicapping our progress. Tim suggested we had reached first base, I said second, but we all agreed that this had been an important day.

#### DAY NINE, TUESDAY, APRIL 1: JOY

Reluctantly, we decided to seek help from Bush administration officials. We figured that while they commanded no great affection in Baghdad, they probably could prove useful by acting through third parties. Phelps secured an appointment at the State Department for himself and Tony Marro, to see Richard Armitage, the deputy secretary of state.

They already were en route to Washington when I got a call from Stephen Hindy. Ed Abington, he said, had informed him that Arafat and his aides had spoken directly to Iraqi leaders, in particular the director of intelligence, who confirmed that his agency was holding Matt and Moises, as well as Molly, Johan, and Philip. He confirmed further that they were being held in prison, but added that they were in good health.

I called Abington, who confirmed the report and added that Yasir Arafat had personally conveyed to Iraqi leaders that he would be very grateful if the Baghdad Five could be released immediately.

And so, for the first time, we had official confirmation from the Iraqi government that they were being held and, more important, that they were alive. Les Payne and I called Marro just before he boarded the 1 P.M. flight for Washington, to relay the good news.

Six minutes later, my colleague Mary Burke, the staff assistant on the foreign desk, received a call and called out to me. "It's Matt," she said, almost casually. I sat down and picked up the receiver.

"Dele, it's Matt," Matthew McAllester said by telephone from the Jordanian side of the Iraqi border.

A great cry arose around the newsroom.









AHMED BOUZID

## THE OTHER WAR: A DEBATE

# QUESTIONS OF BALANCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

o news subject generates more complaints about media objectivity than the Middle East in general and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in particular. While many write letters, e-mail, fax, and phone to voice their dissatisfaction, for some that is not enough.

Ahmed Bouzid and Ira Stoll both started Web sites in 2000 to address the biases they perceive in the coverage. Bouzid's site (www.pmwatch.org) tracks both broadcast and print journalism for what he sees as anti-Palestinian bias, while Stoll's (www.smartertimes.com), when it was active, specifically critiqued The New York Times in all areas of coverage, but pointed most frequently to examples of what he considered an anti-Israeli tilt. The site went dormant when Stoll became involved with the launch of a new daily, The New York Sun, last April.

CJR's Adeel Hassan asked Bouzid, a software developer in Philadelphia, and Stoll, managing editor and vice president of the Sun, to take part in an e-mail debate about news coverage of the conflict and the region. An edited version of the discussion follows.

In the Middle East, do the news media try for fairness and balance? What is it about the story that makes fairness/balance particularly difficult?

**IRA STOLL:** It depends what elements of the news media you are talking about. I think most of the American daily newspapers do try for fairness and balance in their news columns when covering the Middle East. That's not always desirable. Imagine a "balanced" account of September 11, 2001: "Nearly 3,000 New Yorkers were killed yesterday in what Americans decried as a brutal terrorist attack but what al Qaeda viewed as an important victory in its struggle to reduce American imperialist influence and to advance Islamic beliefs." Most defi-

ciencies of fairness and balance, alas, aren't the result of editors deliberately placing their papers on the side of freedom, democracy, and the West and against murderous, repressive tyrants. I suspect they are instead the result of four factors: 1. Self-hatred and bending over backward by Jewish or once-Jewish reporters, editors, and owners; 2. Ordinary, innocent carelessness and mistakes that can creep in on any stories that are constructed by tired human beings working on deadline; 3. The structural imbalance that comes from journalists being able to work mostly free and uninhibited in Israel but being subject to severe restrictions in countries like Syria or Iran; 4. Lack of understanding of the underlying historical and political background.

I'm not sure I accept the proposition that the Middle East is particularly difficult to cover in a fair or balanced way, though someone who does accept it might cite the restrictions on the local press and on independent human rights groups in places like Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt. One might say also that the moral issues are so clear-cut — innocent Israeli bus-riders are being deliberately targeted in cold blood by terrorists funded and encouraged by brutal tyrants — that it makes balance difficult. But many newspapers seem, alas, to have overcome that obstacle.

AHMED BOUZID: If we were talking about news coverage, I'd say that most "respectable publications" do make an effort to be fair and balanced. But the effort more often than not ends in failure, and almost always in favor of the official Israeli point of view. An easy way to gauge this next time you read a story from the AP wire, The New York Times, The Washington Post, or watch a news segment, is to count how many times Israeli officials, Israeli army spokespersons, and Israeli civilians, are quoted, how large are the quotes, where in the story the quotes appear vs. the space given to the Palestinians. Why is this the case? I think it can be explained, at least partially, with one word: access. The media have very easy access to Israeli spokespersons, who are always on the ready with a statement, a TV appearance, who actively promote their point of view. Access to the Palestinians, meanwhile, is made extremely difficult by the realities of the occupation, the curfews, the town closures, the checkpoints, and, of course, by deliberate actions of harassment from the Israeli army against journalists.

Now, if we are talking about the opinion pages, then the answer is much more clear-cut: even the effort itself to be "fair and balanced" is negligible. The New York Times and The Washington Post consistently parcel out 80 percent or more of the op-ed space they dedicate to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict to anti-Palestinian points of view. There are papers that are mindful to give both sides equal time, such as the Los Angeles Times, but they are the exception and not the rule.

Ira's suggestion that the media should be "on the side of freedom, democracy, and the West and against murderous, repressive tyrants" is telling. Ira seems to believe that the media should be cheerleaders for the good guys against the bad guys. My view is that the media's role is first and foremost to inform and enlighten. Telling me that 9/11 is evil is redundant. Telling me what the perpetrators claim to be their motive, how they think, on the other hand, is information that is useful, since it enables us to better understand the threat against this country. And understanding is the first step toward finding an effective solution.

News outlets say they receive criticism from both sides, so they must be doing a good job. Is that a good indicator?

AHMED BOUZID: For me, the fact that two sides are complaining is no indicator that the media are doing their job right. The media do indeed love to point out that they are getting it from both sides, and I imagine the fact that both sides attack them and accuse them of "bias" comes in quite handy for them during heated meetings with media activists. In our case, the fact that anti-Palestinian groups (who, we are told repeatedly, are "much louder" than us) complain is almost always used as an end-all argument and a way to avoid dealing with specific concerns we may raise. For example, that exact response was given to me by the foreign desk editor at The Philadelphia Inquirer, Ned Warwick, back on July 12, 2002, when I met with him and complained that a study we did on their paper found a ratio of thirteen to one for above-the-fold, front-page photographs showing human suffering of Israelis vs. Palestinians. CNN's Rick Davis also replied in the exact same way when I asked him on July 3, 2002, why CNN had established an exhaustive Web site mourning every single Israeli victim of political violence in the first half of that year, but had done nothing of the sort for the hundreds of Palestinian children, women, elderly, and other innocent victims killed by the Israeli army. And just a couple of weeks ago, the exact same answer was given to us by CNN's Aaron Brown, in response to a report we issued on February 20, 2003, in which we found that NewsNight reported 74 percent of Israeli deaths but only 18 percent of Palestinian deaths. They all asserted their "fairness" as an indisputable fact, and pointed to the much higher level of noise made by the anti-Palestinian side as conclusive evidence of that fairness. In other words, instead of addressing the specific complaints, they all opted to simply weasel out.

**IRA STOLL:** I agree with Mr. Bouzid: the fact that complaints come from "both sides" is no indication that the press is "doing a good job." Sometimes the press might not be doing a good job and no one complains. For instance, before September 11, there was little attention in the press to Saudi Arabia's export of Wahhabi Islam. We've since realized it was a hugely important story, and it's gotten lots of attention. Newspapers would do well, too, to become more sophisticated about who is doing the complaining. For instance, as The New York Sun reported in November, the Council on American Islamic Relations, one of the loudest critics of the press, recently received a \$500,000 donation from a Saudi prince. According to several press accounts, CAIR's executive director, Nihad Awad, has publicly declared his support for Hamas, which the U.S. State Department lists as a terrorist group, And Sami Al-Arian, a Florida professor who has written of the "demonization of Muslims by the media," was recently indicted by the American government on charges of being a leader of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorist group and fired by his college.

That's not to suggest that no Arab complaints about the press should be taken seriously, or that supporters of Israel don't sometimes make frivolous complaints. I think that Yasir Arafat's corruption and abuses of authority within the West Bank and Gaza, for instance, were terribly underreported by the mainstream American press. Yet it was mainly

law-abiding Palestinian Arabs who suffered as a result of those abuses.

Briefly, what are the central points that the American media miss? Why?

IRA STOLL: Well, as the editor of an American newspaper, when I know of any stories that much of the American press is missing, I try to put them in my own paper. The New York Sun, for example, recently had two articles that the other papers didn't seem to have. The first was about a directive issued by Kuwait's ministry of information, ordering Western journalists in Kuwait City not to cooperate with Israel or risk "persecution" under Kuwaiti law. The directive was later renounced by the ministry. The second was an editorial pointing out that Yasir Arafat's new prime minister, Abu Mazen, doesn't meet the tests for a new Palestinian leadership that President Bush laid out in his June 24, 2002, speech. The editorial points out that in a 1983 book, The Other Side: The Secret Relationship Between Nazism and the Zionist Movement, Abu Mazen suggested that the figure of six million Jews killed in the Holocaust was "peddled" by the Jews and that in fact "the lewish victims may number six million or be far fewer, even fewer than one million." The point is, some American newspapers and broadcast outlets tend to play down old-fashioned Jew-hatred by the Arabs. Maybe it's a dog-bites-man story.

AHMED BOUZID: We are now more than two years into the second intifada, and yet not once have I seen in any major newspaper a map detailing the socalled generous offers made by Ehud Barak back in Camp David, 2000. Story, upon editorial, upon op-ed, upon news broadcast, upon miserable radio or TV talk show has repeatedly made use of the "95 percent" figure to describe the "offers" made by Ehud Barak - but never maps showing those "offers"! Why have the media decided that it is fine to write about a dispute over land without bothering to show us maps? The so-called 95 percent is territory dotted by army-protected Israeli settlements deep into Palestinian land, and the proposed Palestine is a collection of balkanized enclaves. Showing us maps would make the Palestinians' refusal to accept the Barak "offers" look perfectly reasonable. Not showing the maps makes the Palestinians look like they are not serious about resolving the conflict — a perfect illustration of how just letting the story speak for itself is not an acceptable option, since the conclusions the truth leads us to are much too jarring.

What are the best and worst American news outlets when it comes to Middle East coverage? Why? Can you offer some examples?

**AHMED BOUZID:** I'm not particularly interested in assigning static scores to media outlets, but rather in phenomena that demonstrate a commitment to established narratives. A *New York Times* journalist, Chris Hedges, reported in the October 2001 *Harper's* seeing Israeli soldiers taunting and killing children "for sport." Yet no follow-up reporting has ever been done by anyone that I know of.

Still, setting aside both crude propaganda outlets, such as *The New York Post, The Washington Times*, Fox News, which in my view are hopelessly beyond criticism, variations within the "respectable" mainstream media are quite limited. But we can say things like the *Los Angeles Times* is more open to dissenting views (they give pro-Palestinian columns about the same space as anti-Palestinian columns) than, say, *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post*, the reporting by *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* is much better than that of The Associated Press; Nation-

al Public Radio, for all its deficiencies, is better than anything we watch on TV; the nightly news programs are mediocre at best, but *World News Tonight with Peter Jennings* is better than Dan Rather's or Tom Brokaw's show; CNN is marginally better than Fox News or MSNBC. But I reiterate: the flaws they share are far more interesting than the marginal differences that barely set them apart.

**IRA STOLL:** Mr. Bouzid again throws around these phrases "pro-Palestinian columns" and "anti-Palestinian columns" without defining them. So I wonder, What constitutes "pro-Palestinian" in his definition? I don't think it's "anti-Palestinian" to acknowledge Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state in peace within secure borders. I don't think it's "anti-Palestinian" to acknowledge the right of Israeli civilians to sit in cafés or ride buses without being blown to bits by suicide bombers.

I find questionable, to put it mildly, the notion that the American press should devote "the same space" in its oped pages to those who meet Mr. Bouzid's definition of "pro-Palestinian."

My own list of the best news outlets, aside from my own paper, would include the editorial page of *The Wall Street Journal*, which recently published an im-

portant piece by Iraqi opposition leader Ahmad Chalabi and a memorable feature on Omar Karsou, a Palestinian reformer. *Commentary*, the monthly journal, has published some of the best journalistic analysis of the Middle East. Worsts: 1. NPR; 2. PBS.

AHMED BOUZID: What I mean by an anti-Palestinian journalist is someone who opposes the establishment of a fully sovereign Palestinian state, who believes that Palestinians understand only force, and who never, ever acknowledges, let alone sympathizes with, the plight of innocent Palestinians. Pro-Palestinian columnists all accept Israel's right to exist, but also insist that Palestinians have a right to a fully sovereign Palestinian state alongside Israel.

Let's just note that not once, ever, have I read a column by a pro-Palestinian where there was even a hint of a challenge to Israel's right to exist. Not once! By contrast, regular anti-Palestinian columnists — such as William Safire, Charles Krauthammer, George Will, Jeff Jacoby, Daniel Pipes, A.M. Rosenthal, Mort Zuckerman — never tire of denying Palestinians' right to exist as a nation, regularly call for more death and destruction against them, and never, ever, acknowledge, let alone sympathize with, the

## DEFINING NEWS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

A READER'S QUERY

#### BY BRUCE WEXLER

Amid all the coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, is the press missing a certain kind of story that really ought to be reported? A few examples:

In 1994 Yitzhak Frankenthal's son was murdered by Hamas. Instead of calling for violent reprisal, he reached out to Palestinians who had suffered similar losses. He created a group called the Bereaved Families Forum, and today 150 Palestinian and 250 Israeli families are members. Representatives of the forum opened a fourteen-city U.S. tour on October 14, 2002. On that day, I watched a middle-aged female employee of the Palestinian Authority embrace an Israeli man, as he told of his son's death in a bombing two months earlier. No major newspaper or television station covered the forum's meetings, or the acts of mutual support that they engendered. Last fall, Frankenthal started a phone service that allows any Palestinian to be randomly connected to an Israeli, and vice-versa. More than 130,000 calls were made in the first three months of operation. Have you heard about it?

On September 3, 2002, two unlikely partners issued a joint peace proposal that they believed represented the views of the majorities in both their communities. The authors of the proposal: Sari Nusseibeh, president of Al Quds University and formerly the PLO's chief representative in Jerusalem; and Ami Ayalon, former head of Shin Bet, Israel's internal security service and a former admiral in Israel's navy. The proposal calls for two states along 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as a shared-governance open city, and financial compensation for displaced Palestinians. Support for the proposal has been growing ever since. On March 19 the Israeli newspaper Ha'Aretz reported that dozens of Fatah leaders, including top members of the Palestinian Authority's security forces, met and announced their support for the plan. Why haven't the editors of most American newspapers and television news programs considered this more newsworthy?

■ On January 21, 2002, prominent Christian, Muslim, and Jewish leaders issued The First Alexandria Declaration of the Religious Leaders of the Holy Land, which called violence in that region "evil," and proclaimed their desire to "live together as neighbors, respecting the integrity of each other's historical and religious inheritance." The declaration was the result of a meeting co-hosted by the archbishop of Canterbury and Sheikh Mohamed Sayed Tantawi, the most senior Islamic figure in Egypt. Signatories included an impressive list of top Jewish, Muslim, and Christian religious leaders. In the last four years, no other statement has been approved by both the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli govern-

plight of innocent Palestinians unless to make cynical use of their suffering.

IRA STOLL: It's not true that the columnists he names "never, ever acknowledge, let alone sympathize with, the plight of innocent Palestinians." Mr. Krauthammer, in the September 3, 2002, Weekly Standard wrote, "Those Palestinians wishing minimal civil relations with Israel live in fear for their lives." Jeff Jacoby, in the May 6, 1997, Boston Globe wrote, "In Arafatland, power flows not from the people but from the barrel of an AK-47. Teachers who go on strike are rounded up by the police. Students are warned in class that if they criticize the regime, their families will pay the price." Daniel Pipes in the February 2003 Commentary writes, "The Palestinians, in other words, are suffering even more from the consequences of their own violence than is Israel." Mortimer Zuckerman, in the January 14, 2001, Daily News, wrote of the horrors of "the Palestinian practice of employing children as human shields for gunmen." He quoted the Tulkarm Women's Union, a Palestinian Arab group that wrote to Arafat, "We urge you to issue instructions to the police force to stop sending innocent children to their death." A.M. Rosenthal, in the May 30, 1997, New York Times, wrote of Arafat's "Terrorism against Palestinians — the murder of Arabs who sell land to Jews, the arrest of Palestinians who criticized him." These are just a few examples. There are many others.

Do you feel that your criticisms of the press have made a difference in coverage? Do you look forward to the day when this conflict is no longer a major story?

AHMED BOUZID: One can't really gauge one's influence, and I don't know how to quantify the success of Palestine Media Watch. But what is important is to have faith that what you do makes a difference, and to stick to it. And if you want to have an effect, you need to be able to repeat yourself - and the obvious - day in and day out. I, for one, will never tire of asking editors at The New York Times, for instance, why they continue to ignore reports that Israeli soldiers deliberately target civilians and why they insist on portraying Israeli actions as, at worst, "heavyhanded" acts of self-defense. I will raise that question whenever I can, until hopefully something clicks.

And yes, I look forward to the day when the conflict is no longer a major story but only if the conflict is resolved equitably. I do not want to see the conflict ignored by the media, simply because there is nothing "new" going on: a few Pales in ans are killed every day, a few houses demolished, a few settlements built or enlarged — the usual "boring" litany.

IRA STOLL: My work on Smartertimes.com may have played some role in attracting backers and subscribers for The New York Sun, and, as I've said, I do think the Sun has done some exceptional coverage in the year or so it's been in existence. More broadly, I am glad to have played a small supporting role, not just in press criticism but also in actual journalism at the Forward, The Wall Street Journal, The Ierusalem Post, and now The New York Sun. in the change in American policy in the Middle East that we are now seeing played out in Iraq. It's an approach that places a new emphasis on freedom, democracy, and rule of law. Certainly, that approach has made its way into more of the press coverage now than, say, seven years ago.

I, too, look forward to the day when freedom, democracy, and rule of law spread in the Middle East beyond Israel. In Iraq that may be soon. That will benefit those who now live under the boot of tyranny. It will also, if history is any guide, dramatically reduce the security threat to Israel. As a Jew and a human being, I certainly pray for lasting peace in the Middle East and everywhere else.

ment. Still, many of the reporters who attended the first day of the two-day meeting left before the second day. How many Americans heard anything of the declaration? A Nexis search for that day turned up only three stories.

These are not inconsequential matters. Press coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict creates, reflects, and sustains a sense of irreconcilable difference that leaves little reason for hope. The public receives passionate sound bites from partisan Palestinian and Israeli spokespersons.

A few of us are making an effort to amplify the "underheard" third voice of Israelis and Palestinians working together in mutual respect. Along with Andrew Young, the former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations and former mayor of Atlanta, I have created an organization called A Different Future (www.adifferentfuture.org). It is an interfaith, international, and nongovernmental organization to promote peace in the Middle East. We have identified more than fifty organizations in which Palestinians and Israelis, or Arabs and Jews, are working together. My query is: Why are these activi-

ties not more newsworthy?

I have my theories. For one thing, these organizations lack the public relations expertise and resources to compete with official government sources for press attention. A symbiotic dance has developed between the governments and the press. Many American correspondents have large areas of the Middle East to cover. It's rare for a day to go by without a political event, an act of violence, or a handout from government offices. It's easier to deal with officialdom.

For another, news editors tend to think about the Middle East in terms of such (very real) problems as the governance of Jerusalem, the fate of Palestinian refugees, and the future of the Israeli settlements. These are important and newsworthy, but the problems can be understood in other equally real terms. For example: Why have these diplomatic issues been so difficult to resolve? Part of the answer is the deep distrust between most Israelis and Palestinians, and the difficulty each has in seeing the other as fully human. So, doesn't the paucity of news coverage of these efforts to reach across the divide

help perpetuate the conflict?

Recent polls commissioned by Search for Common Ground (an organization that promotes interethnic peace) underscore these issues. Palestinians and Israelis were asked if they would support a two-state solution and an end to violence if the 1967 borders were reinstated. Among Palestinians, 42 percent said yes, and another 30 percent said they would support it — if the Israelis would agree, and stop the violence. Among Israelis, 51 percent supported the proposition and another 21 percent said they would if they thought the Palestinians would go along with it.

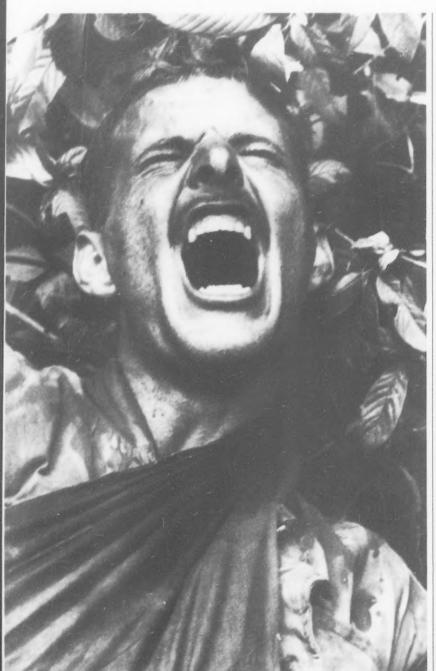
Clearly, there is a base to build upon. But a free press in a free-market economy seems to prefer to cover the all-too-frequent acts of violence and hatred, instead of efforts to build bridges between the two sides. Is this a minor flaw in a generally outstanding system of reporting? Or is it a serious lapse that needs correcting?

- Bruce Wexler

Bruce Wexler (bruce.wexler@yale.edu) is a professor of psychiatry at Yale.

## Will You Flinch?

Confronting the Images of War



BY ANTHONY SWOFFORD

mong the reasons that nations and men wage war, companionship is rarely considered in the press and the politics that presage the warfare and propel the armies. It should be. In World War II the Allies were companions and so, too, the doomed members of the Axis. War companions share political agendas and emotional exigencies. Companions count on their compatriots, companions urge the weak to fight toward the next hill farther, and the strong carry the weak on their shoulders and offer munitions, intelligence, manpower, and money. This goes for heads of state at palace dinners and grunts sitting in fighting holes, sharing stories of home over a meal of reconstituted beef, bartering for smokes and stamps.

So it's fitting that two books from different cloths — criticism and photography — have become companions to each other and to the reviewer while his country wages war again.

Peter Howe's Shooting Under Fire is an astounding and torturous collection of combat and conflict photography from ten photographers who have covered the international carnage of the last forty years. In Regarding the Pain of Others, Susan Sontag offers a book-length meditation on the results of offering such images for mass consumption.

Howe offered his photographers ample space to comment on their profession and, most interestingly, on the particulars of individual shots. The captions are often welcome, as when Don McCullin tells the reader that he set up his Tet Offensive composition of the dead North Vietnamese soldier surrounded by his ammunition and personal effects — photos of a daughter or younger sister, what looks to be a letter but could be a patrol order, and the useless contents of his First

Wounded U.S. Marine, Vietnam, 1966

Aid tin "which would hardly suffice for any bullet wound, let alone one in the head." Before accessorizing the corpse, McCullin had witnessed two soldiers plundering the body: "They kept laughing at the photographs in his wallet and throwing them on the ground and calling him gook this and gook that and motherfucker .... "The rich caption offers us another entry into the photo, a temporal and spatial expansion of the scene surrounding the dead soldier, something that the photo minus the photographer's commentary wouldn't give us. We can almost hear our own boots sinking into the jungle mud as we watch McCullin prep his corpse with the dead man's history. Now, the victims have multiplied - the dead soldier, the girl in the soldier's photos, as well as the American soldiers who'd lost their humanity months or weeks or minutes before talking trash to the corpse and invading his past. Mc-Cullin is a victim, too. He's obviously tortured over staging the photo, over his

> SHOOTING UNDER FIRE: THE WORLD OF THE WAR PHOTOGRAPHER

BY PETER HOWE ARTISAN. 224 PP. \$35

#### **REGARDING THE PAIN OF OTHERS**

BY SUSAN SONTAG FARRAR, STRAUS & GIROUX 131 PP. \$20

photographer's "intruding on their grief . . . . Don't think it's been easy to live with that, because it hasn't." The photographer defends this intrusion, and the viewer thanks him for the soft touch, the loving impulse (loving of art and life as well as death) that doctored the otherwise gory death. Perhaps the viewer is a victim, too, because the combat death has been confused with the artistry and the message of the composed photo. What is real? Who has died and how, for what? What does the photographer say that the dead man never will? Do we care? Do we look coldly away?

Philip Jones Griffiths's short essay "On Being a Photographer" is humble and humane, and it counters the bravado and swagger that we've come to expect from war photographers and journalists: "I'd never been enamored of the system of journalism. I never really expected much from it. I take pictures for

myself." His photo "Saigon, 1968" is as absurd as they come: a soldier sitting in a chair, resting his foot on a window sill, providing covering fire through the window, a child's naked doll beneath his ornate shooting chair. Griffiths writes, "That's war. It's unbelievable; it's just unbelievable." But this photo helps the viewer understand and believe both the brutality and silliness of war.

Commentary from other photographers makes the reviewer wish Howe had simply allowed the photos to speak without the photographer's written intrusion or edited out some of the more self-important commentaries. James Nachtwey, writing about one of his September 11, 2001, photos, congratulates himself on what is obvious and contextualized within the horrific photo of a collapsing World Trade Center tower (and part of his job): "As I had so many times before, in so many other places in the world, I was heading into an area from which everyone else was fleeing." And Laurent Van der Stockt would have us believe that when, in the Arabian desert in 1991, he inadvertently directed (and then followed in his air-conditioned Land Cruiser) French troops toward what turned out to be an Iraqi tank battalion, he caused the ensuing battle. "And there I was on the roof of my car taking pictures of an action between the French and Iraqis that I had provoked." But had he? Hadn't nations provoked the action and hadn't the men around him been engaged in the fighting, the real work of the war? Here Van der Stockt sounds like the stock cowboy photographer, bigger than the story, bigger than the camera, playing his own marching tune against his empty film canisters. We can hear the click of his shutter between the explosions of the tank barrage, but do we care, now that he opened his mouth?

Sontag, discussing a photo of a World War I veteran whose face has been shot away, insists that "there is shame as well as shock in looking at the close-up of a real horror." And she goes on, "Perhaps the only people with the right to look at images of suffering of this extreme order are those who could do something to alleviate it — say, the surgeons at the military hospital where the photograph was taken — or those who could learn from it." We might not all be military sur-



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Later Sontag will attack the school of the hyper-real, the simulacra, those who insist that reality has become a game, a spectacle: "To speak of reality becoming a spectacle is a breathtaking provincialism. It universalizes the viewing habits of a small, educated population living in the rich part of the world, where news has been converted into entertainment . . . It suggests, perversely, unseriously, that there is no real suffering in the world."

ontag's catalog of suffering and Howe's introduction share some of the most enduring photographic images of war ever—the photograph by Joe Rosenthal of the second American flag-raising at Mt. Suribachi on Iwo Jima in 1945; Eddie Adams's photo of the execution of a Vietcong suspect by South Vietnam's chief of police, Nguyen Ngoc Loan; Nick Ut's photo of the napalmed children fleeing the village of Trang Bang; and Robert Capa's shot of the Spanish militiaman at the moment the bullet enters the man's body.

Concerning the Adams moment-ofexecution shot, Sontag says, "There can be no suspicion about the authenticity . . . . Nevertheless, it was staged — by General Loan, who had led the prisoner, hands tied behind his back, out to the street where journalists had gathered; he would not have carried out the summary execution there had they not been available to witness it." Available. There is so much available to us now. The photographer makes himself available to the executioner, and the viewer makes herself available to the photographer. And who is responsible for what happens once the photograph is affixed to the gallery wall or printed in the fine volume of war photography? "The photographer's intentions do not determine the meaning of the photograph." The viewer determines the meaning. Once the print is made, the photographer is offstage, and the viewer owns the work. And time and politics can change the meaning of the photo, Sontag insists: "The pictures of wretched hollow-eyed GIs that once seemed subversive of militarism and imperialism may seem inspirational. Their revised subject: ordinary American young men doing their unpleasant, ennobling duty." Thus the photographer's power is wrested from him as if a thief had ripped off his camera bag. And the fact that the young men are not ordinary is lost, as is the fact that their duty is not ordinary, nor is it especially noble. And

only the men who have fought, and the journalists who have honestly narrated their fighting with photos and words, will know this. "To remember is, more and more, not to recall a story but to be able to call up a picture," Sontag writes. Will memories of war thus be co-opted by the whims of a community or political climate? Will the man who once wept over his memories of war one day find them thrilling or even inspirational? Probably.

Narrative is the antidote to such easy reformulations of history and memory: "A narrative seems likely to be more effective than an image," Sontag writes. The time commitment is different for the image and the narrative. The image is easier to walk away from.

A narrative moment the reviewer can never walk away from is the last few pages of *The Magic Mountain*, when Hans Castorp joins Germany in battle, no longer at the sanatorium but now in the combat asylum, dirt clods hitting his shin, humans exploding behind him — Hans Castorp disappearing into the abyss. Thomas Mann insists we bid Hans Castorp farewell before we are certain of his fate, "Farewell, Hans." Combat photographers must bid farewell to their photos in the same way, without ever knowing the picture's fate.

Howe and Sontag have given us two books that speak across genres. As much as Sontag seems in the end to attempt to minimize the usability and usefulness of combat photography for civil action, her long meditation on suffering and images has done the work that all the best works of criticism do: she's sent the reader outside of the work — the viewing list that a careful reader will leave her book with is priceless. Howe's photographers cover the most gruesome and senseless fighting of the twentieth century. The commentary and captioning that he allows his photographers supports Sontag's assertion that the narrative holds the viewer/reader longer, thus creating a deeper and more lasting effect. Both books insist that the critic and photographer and writer must keep trying to transfer the reality of warfare to the viewer/reader. Sontag says, "Narratives can make us understand. Photographs do something else: they haunt us." But we can be haunted by our understanding, both imagistic and narrative. And at this point in history, shouldn't we be?

Anthony Swofford is the author of Jarhead: A Marine's Chronicle of the Gulf War and Other Battles.

### C BOOK REPORTS

#### BY JAMES BOYLAN

### FANATICS AND FIRE-EATERS: NEWSPAPERS AND THE COMING OF THE CIVIL WAR

By Lorman A. Ratner and Dwight L. Teeter Jr. University of Illinois Press 140 pp. \$34.95

n this contribution to the University of Illinois Press "History of Communication" series, two senior scholars at the University of Tennessee reexamine the role of the emergent urban press in heating up the country for the Civil War. They show how newspapers of the North and South widened the gulf during six critical episodes from 1856 to 1861 — the assault on Senator Sumner of Massachusetts by a southern member of Congress, the Dred Scott decision, the debate over a proslavery constitution for the Kansas Territory, the John Brown raid, the election of Lincoln, and of course the firing on Fort Sumter. Ratner and Teeter write: "Newspapers, strutting and posturing, chose to exaggerate in order to excite the passions of readers." The result, they conclude, was erosion of the concept of a single national community; instead, there were two nations that went to war.

### DIRTY DISCOURSE: SEX AND INDECENCY IN AMERICAN RADIO

By Robert L. Hilliard and Michael C. Keith Iowa State Press 297 pp. \$49.99

wo Boston communication professors with more than fifty books between them turn their attention to the quixotic effort to control dirty talk on radio. They observe that since 1978 - the date of the Seven Dirty Words Supreme Court decision allowing FCC censorship of "indecency" - "the FCC and Congress have been running a marathon of deregulation in everything but their perceptions of indecency.' They sprinkle the book with plentiful examples of the broadcast words that have inspired continual but largely ineffective legislation and regulation. Dishearteningly, one realizes that august government bodies have wasted their time and the public monies on what

amounts to grown-up versions of littleboy sniggering. The whole Seven Dirty Words decision is reproduced in an appendix, and it is almost worth the substantial purchase price to be able to read Justice William J. Brennan, Jr.'s dissent, in which he charges his Supreme Court brethren, who professed shock at hearing universally used taboo words, with "acute ethnocentric myopia."

#### BEST NEWSPAPER WRITING 2002: WINNERS: THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF NEWSPAPER EDITORS COMPETITION

Edited by Keith Woods The Poynter Institute and Bonus Books 412 pp. and CD-ROM. \$14.95 paper

his is the twenty-fourth compilation of Best Newspaper Writing, which is selected each year by a panel named by the American Society of Newspaper Editors and put into book and CD form by the Poynter Institute, the busy center in St. Petersburg, Florida, dedicated to improving American journalism. Besides presenting the winning stories in full and the prize photographs and runner-up stories on the CD, the book provides interviews with the reporters (or signed articles recalling their experience on the stories), along with questions and exercises for possible classroom use.

Poynter of course is best known for its efforts, through workshops and coaching, to improve the quality of newspaper writing, and at least indirectly such a collection as this one reflects the standards that it seeks to raise. There is much here that is encouraging — writing that represents strong, intelligent responses in such circumstances as the destruction of the World Trade Center; complexity and nuance in the stories presented for the new prize in "diversity writing"; the dearth of old-fashioned bombast in the editorials.

And yet there are troubling aspects. Foremost is the evidence here that to be a star in newspaper writing one must at all costs avoid writing a straight news story. The sidebar, in its many forms, is the route to fame. Among all the worthy stories reprinted here that were first published on September 12, 2001, only one, by a team from the *Los Angeles Times*, is a comprehensive, full-scale ac-

count of the news event. Even the winner of the major prize for deadline reporting, N.R. Kleinfield, wrote what *The New York Times* calls the "off-lead," or what Kleinfield himself refers to as "the scene story of all scene stories." By definition, it appears, the best newspaper writing is not news writing.

The other curiosity is the continuing weakness of newspaper journalists for the punchy: Sentence. Period. Paragraph. Perhaps Kleinfeld got by with his opener: "It kept getting worse." But others do likewise with less success: "It was a scene out of a war movie." "They were like scenes from a catastrophe movie." "An hour of terror changed everything." "Two brutal crimes. Two disparate punishments." And even the introduction to the book begins: "Two hours. Three sites. Four planes. One overwhelming, unimaginable story." To succeed, the old tough-guy lead must be exactly on pitch and more than a quick bid for attention. After decades of abuse, the punchy has mostly lost its punch, and no longer serves in the best of times or the worst of times, as one famous lead went.

## A GUIDE TO ENGLISH IN THE 21ST CENTURY By Godfrey Howard

Duckworth 224 pp. \$14.95

his little handbook, a revision of a version first published in 1985, is designed, says the author, to be read as well as consulted. And reading it is rewarding, what with the author's genially British short essays, apt illustrative quotations, and clever cartoons by Gray Jolliffe. A believer in the continuing evolution of proper usage, Howard estimates the current status of many terms with a three-asterisk system: one asterisk means that only a stick-in-the-mud would object ("bloody"), two asterisks indicate that the term is usually improper in written English ("bugger"), and three denotes illiterate or offensive expressions ("arsehole"). Moreover, several dozen terms are marked with daggers as being new or renovated, or perhaps carried over from the American language ("round trip"). He also points to a decline in the use of periods (which he calls "stops") after abbreviations such as Mr. Ms, and Dr

# VOICES

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VOICES, funded in part by the Ford Foundation, offers independent viewpoints on a variety of subjects. CIR welcomes contributions. You may submit manuscripts to the locations listed on page 4.

# The Lies We Bought

The unchallenged "evidence" for war



hortly before American military forces invaded Iraq, a troubled Ellen Goodman raised a singularly important question about the Bush administration's propaganda campaign for war—"How we got from there to here"

There, according to Goodman, was innocent 9/11 victimhood at the hands of religious fanatics; here, was bullying superpower bent on destroying a secular dictator. I assumed that someone as astute as Goodman would re-

veal at least part of the answer — that the American media provided free transportation to get the White House from there to here. But nowhere in her nationally syndicated column did she state the obvious — that the success of "Bush's PR War" (the headline on the piece) was largely dependent on a compliant press that uncritically repeated almost every fraudulent administration claim about the threat posed to America by Saddam Hussein.

Late as she was, Goodman was better than most in even recognizing that there was a disinformation campaign aimed at the people and Congress. Just a few columnists seriously challenged the White House advertising assault. Looking back over the debris of half-truths and lies, I can't help but ask my own question of Goodman: Where was she — indeed, where was the American press — on September 7, 2002, a day when we were sorely in need of reporters?

It was then that the White House propaganda drive began in earnest, with the appearance before television cameras of George Bush and Tony Blair at Camp David. Between them, the two politicians cited a "new" report from the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency that allegedly stated that Iraq was "six months away" from building a nuclear weapon. "I don't know what more evidence we need," declared the president.

For public relations purposes, it hardly mattered that no such IAEA report existed, because almost no one in the media bothered to check out the story. (In the twenty-first paragraph of her story on the press conference, *The Washington Post*'s Karen DeYoung did quote an IAEA spokesman saying, in DeYoung's words, "that the agency has issued no new report," but she didn't confront the White House with this terribly interesting fact.) What mattered was the unencumbered rollout of a commercial for war — the one that the White House chief of staff and former General Motors executive Andrew Card had famously withheld earlier in the summer: "From a marketing point of view, you don't introduce new products in August."

Millions of people saw Bush tieless, casually inarticulate, but determined-looking and self-confident, making a completely uncorroborated (and, at that point, uncontradicted) case for preemptive war. While we contemplate the irony of Bush quoting a UN weapons inspection agency that he would later dismiss, we might ask ourselves why no more evidence was needed than the president's say-so — and why no reporters asked for any.

John MacArthur is publisher of Harper's Magazine and author of Second Front: Censorship and Propaganda in the Gulf War.

But the next day, more "evidence" suddenly appeared, on the front page of the Sunday *New York Times*. In a disgraceful piece of stenography, Michael Gordon and Judith Miller inflated an administration leak into something resembling imminent Armageddon: "More than a decade after Saddam Hussein agreed to give up weapons of mass destruction, Iraq has stepped up its quest for nuclear weapons and has embarked on a worldwide hunt for materials to make an atomic bomb, Bush administration officials said today."

The key to this A-bomb program was the attempted purchase of "specially designed aluminum tubes, which American officials believe were intended as components of centrifuges to enrich uranium." Mysteriously, none of those tubes had reached Iraq, but "American officials" wouldn't say why, "citing the sensitivity of the intelligence."

Gordon and Miller were mostly careful to attribute their information to anonymous "administration officials," but at one point they couldn't restrain themselves and crossed the line into commentary. After nodding to administration "critics" who favored containment of Hussein, they wrote this astonishing paragraph:

"Still, Mr. Hussein's dogged insistence on pursuing his nuclear ambitions, along with what defectors described in interviews as Iraq's push to improve and expand Baghdad's chemical and biological arsenals, have brought Iraq and the United States to the brink of war."

That Sunday, Card's new-product introduction moved into high gear when Vice President Dick Cheney appeared on NBC's *Meet the Press* to brandish Saddam's supposed nuclear threat. Prompted by a helpful Tim Russert, Cheney cited the aluminum tubes story in that morning's *New York Times* — a story leaked by Cheney's White House colleagues. Russert: "Aluminum tubes." Cheney: "Specifically aluminum tubes." This gave the "six months away" canard a certain ring of independent confirmation: "There's a story in *The New York Times* this morning," said Cheney. "And I want to attribute the *Times*."

Does it matter that, in the months that followed, aluminum tubes as weapons of mass destruction were discredited time and again? Does it matter that the former U.S. weapons inspector David Albright (not the usual suspect Scott Ritter) told 60 Minutes, in an interview broadcast on December 8 (a program in which I participated) that "people who understood gas centrifuges almost uniformly felt that these tubes were not specific to gas centrifuge" for production of enriched uranium — that the administration was "selectively picking information to bolster a case that the Iraqi nuclear threat was more imminent than it is, and in essence, scare people"? Will the Times ever publish a clarification (à la Wen Ho Lee) based on IAEA chief Mohammed el-Baradei's January 9 and March 7 reports insisting that there was "no evidence" that the 81 mm tubes were intended for anything other than conventional rocket production?

As for the "defectors" with special knowledge of Saddam's elusive chemical weapons stockpile, did Miller and Gordon — did anyone in the mainstream U.S. press —

take proper note of *Newsweek*'s exclusive on March 3? In it, John Barry reported that Iraq's most important defector, Hussein Kamel, who had run Saddam's nuclear and biological weapons program, told the CIA and UN weapons inspectors in the summer of 1995 "that after the gulf war, Iraq destroyed all its chemical and biological weapons stocks and the missiles to deliver them."

And what of Saddam's overall nuclear procurement program? When el-Baradei told the UN Security Council on March 7 that supporting documents of alleged attempts to buy uranium from Niger were forged, no clarification of the Gordon-Miller report appeared in the Grey Lady. Perhaps *Times* people still believed their own scare story from all those months before: "Hard-liners are alarmed that American intelligence underestimated the pace and scale of Iraq's nuclear program before Baghdad's defeat in the gulf war," the September 8 piece reported. "The first sign of a 'smoking gun,' they argue, may be a mushroom cloud."

The few corrections and refutations of the White House line were too little and too late for American democracy. Enterprising reporting was needed from the moment of the Bush-Blair p.r. gambit to October 10, the day Congress abdicated its war-making power to the president. During that crucial period, I was able to find only one newspaper story that straightforwardly countered the White House nuclear threat propaganda; it appeared, of all places, in the right-wing, Sun Myung Moon-owned Washington Times. On September 27, a very competent piece by Joseph Curl (unfortunately buried on page 16) pointed out not only that there was no "new report" by the IAEA saying Saddam was six months away from the A-bomb, but also that the agency had never issued a report predicting any time frame. Indeed, when IAEA inspectors pulled out of Iraq in December 1998, spokesman Mark Gwozdecky told Curl, "We had concluded that we had neutralized their nuclear-weapons program. We had confiscated their fissile material. We had destroyed all their key buildings and equipment."

The American media failed the country badly these past eight months. As journalists, what can we do about it? Perhaps we need to adopt the rapid-response techniques used in public relations, something akin to James Carville's and George Stephanopoulos's famous "War Room" ethos: never leave an accusation unanswered before the end of a news cycle.

Unfortunately, the politicians and their p.r. people know all too well the propaganda dictum related nearly twenty years ago by Peter Teeley, press secretary to then Vice President George H.W. Bush. Teeley was responding to complaints that the elder Bush, during a televised debate, had grossly distorted the words of his and Ronald Reagan's opponents, the Democratic candidates Walter Mondale and Geraldine Ferraro. As Teeley explained it to *The New York Times* in October 1984, "You can say anything you want during a debate, and 80 million people hear it." If "anything" turns out to be false and journalists correct it, "So what. Maybe 200 people read it, or 2,000 or 20,000."

## **One War, Two Channels**

A young Arab-American keeps one finger on the remote



atching the news at my parents' house, in their Arab-styled living room in Pasadena, California, isn't easy these days. We have two mammoth remote controls that we just can't figure out. Our mission: to switch between the satellite television that airs al-Jazeera and

BY RHONDA ROUMANI
American broadcast outlets like CNN and ABC.
Switching channels shouldn't be so hard.

My parents installed satellite TV a few years ago so they could tune into a popular Syrian soap. During the war in Iraq, however, they found it hard to revel in nostalgia. By virtue of similar experience, language, and culture, the Iraqi people are their brethren, under a dictatorship similar to what they faced growing up in Syria. Every night, with two remotes in hand, they flipped between al-Jazeera and CNN, sometimes successfully, hoping to get a sense of what was really happening on the ground.

When al-Jazeera first aired in the U.S., my father was ecstatic that an independent Arab news outlet existed, one not overtly run by a state. Al-Jazeera criticized the untouchables — Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Jordan. It brought on guests who debated controversial topics and criticized government leaders. It challenged both Arab governments and U.S. policies, something that my parents and other Arab-Americans believe U.S.-based channels fail to do.

But Arab-American opinion about al-Jazeera has become more complex and polarized in wartime. Detroit residents attacked an al-Jazeera correspondent because they believed the network's coverage to be too anti-American. Meanwhile, other Arab-Americans believe that the al-Jazeera offices in both Iraq and Afghanistan were deliberately targeted by the U.S. military. Some even believe al-Jazeera is in cahoots with the American and Israeli governments, airing Osama bin Laden videos at moments beneficial to U.S. interests. Still, even those who are critical of it continue to watch. It's one of the few news channels that show images of wounded Palestinians and Iraqis. On al-Jazeera, at least, Arab life seems to matter.

I now live in New York, and al-Jazeera is no longer a daily staple for me. I have to go to smoky shee-sha or hookah bars or to friends' houses to watch the popular and controversial al-Jazeera. The Egyptian Café in Astoria, Queens, is one such place. Arab men — Egyptians, Palestinians, Yemenis, Syrians — and occasionally women, visit the café after a long day at work to sip mint tea, play backgammon, and smoke fruit-flavored shee-shas. Lime-green and pink walls adorned with gold-framed mirrors remind the visitor of Cairo. In the corner, a large, flat-screen television blares al-Jazeera.

I visited the café on the day that the Iraqi regime seemed to have fallen — when the statue of Saddam Hussein in al-Fardus Square was toppled. On U.S. channels the statue's fall was shown all day long. On al-Jazeera, it was only a small part of a big picture. The Arab channel conveyed the chaos of the streets, broadcasting images of people both celebrating and looting. Al-Jazeera even made sure to show a picture of an Iraqi man celebrating by waving a picture of Dick Cheney. But it also showed the anguish of Iraqi civilians: images from Basra of a wounded boy, his face partially burned off.

In the café, a Somali woman with a red velvet hat and burgundy wrap elegantly smoked her shee-sha, glancing occasionally at the screen. When the soldier draped an American flag on the face of the statue, she sighed. "I stopped watching this — it's so depressing," she said, though she kept watching.

Nabil Mohamad, an architect who has been in the U.S. for twenty-five years, announced that al-Jazeera is the only channel not influenced by the supporters of Israel. "It tells you the truth and it's not controlled by the Jews, like the media here," he asserted. He watches the satellite channel at home every night.

"You can't believe any station," said another man, an Egyptian archeologist named Hassan who works in a thrift shop in Flushing and who said he watches all news outlets. "When you watch al-Jazeera, you see what they do to the people, not what the army is doing. Al-Jazeera shows the bad side of America. CNN shows you the bad side of the Iraqi government. I watch CNN — nobody gets killed. I watch al-Jazeera — it's like a tragedy."

When I visit my parents back in Pasadena, I still struggle with the two remotes, as I am struggling with the two worlds of al-Jazeera and CNN. Hassan just might be right when he concludes that "something is missing" from both of them.

Rhonda Roumani is a free-lance journalist in New York who has been working with the Committee to Protect Journalists to track press freedom in Iraq.

## **False Alarm at the FCC?**

Ending TV-newspaper cross-ownership rules may have little effect



tentative June 2 date has been set for a Federal Communications Commission vote on whether and to what extent the existing restrictions on newspaper-TV crossownership should be relaxed. Much of the debate has centered on the importance of maintaining so-called

by Jonathan A. KNEE viewpoint diversity. There has been little consideration of whether such a regime change will have any practical impact on who actually owns what. An examination of the current industry structure suggests that, regardless of the merits of the issues, relatively little is likely to happen in the near term even if the restrictions were lifted entirely.

The largest TV station groups are those owned by the four leading networks — ABC, CBS, NBC, and Fox. Each of these networks is part of a larger, widely held, publicly traded conglomerate. The newspaper industry by contrast is highly fragmented, with the ten largest newspaper groups accounting for only half of overall circulation. Even the largest newspaper company, Gannett, is a fraction of the size of any of the four TV conglomerates.

It's argued that such an industry structure is an invitation for the giant TV conglomerates to gobble up the smaller newspaper companies. Three highly relevant factors make that unlikely.

First: Of the four TV conglomerates, only News Corp. (Fox) owns any newspapers in the U.S. — a single money-losing tabloid, the *New York Post*. Of the other three, none have expressed interest in newspaper ownership. Disney sold all the newspapers it acquired with its purchase of ABC. News Corp. has a historic attachment to newspapers, but Rupert Murdoch's other media aspirations make an aggressive push into newspaper ownership financially impractical.

Second: Newspapers don't often come up for sale. Family control is the norm in the newspaper industry. All but a handful of the public companies ensure continued family control through a special class of voting stock.

Third: Even if broadcasters were eager to buy newspapers, and even if newspaper groups put some of their papers up for sale, the market overlap between any major newspaper group and any major broadcaster is limited. The result would be that the broadcaster might get the supposed benefit of cross-ownership in

one or two markets, but this would represent a tiny portion of the overall transaction.

So much for broadcast buying up print. What about the reverse? If it is unrealistic for broadcasters to buy newspapers in a world of permissible media cross-ownership, will newspaper companies start buying broadcast stations in the cities in which they publish? Here it is useful to distinguish between pure newspaper companies and those that already are in the broadcasting business.

Anthony Ridder, the CEO of Knight Ridder — which owns no TV stations and is the largest pure newspaper company — has declared that he sees no operating benefits in combining newspaper and television operations. A number of other major newspaper companies, such as Pulitzer and Lee, once owned large station groups but have jettisoned them. The size of the remaining print-only newspaper companies, and their general aversion to debt, makes them unlikely buyers of television stations. This leaves those newspaper companies that are already broadcasters. The two largest, Gannett and Tribune, indeed have expressed interest in taking advantage of changes in the crossownership rules. But Tribune already has cross-ownership in its largest markets through FCC waivers and combinations that predate the rule — so-called grandfathering. Gannett also benefits from cross-ownership under a grandfathered situation in Phoenix. These acquisitive companies are likely to find relatively few incremental opportunities of size in which to exploit relaxed cross-ownership rules.

Lifting cross-ownership rules completely would allow a number of transactions that might not otherwise occur. Given the strategic focus of the TV conglomerates on owning their major-market affiliates, these deals are likely to happen primarily in smaller markets as individual stations or newspapers come up for sale. But there is no reason to expect that such deregulation would fundamentally alter the media ownership landscape. While the ideological debates over the crossownership issue are healthy, it is useful to keep in mind that, at least with respect to TV and newspapers, they may in the end be much ado about very little.

Jonathan A. Knee is a senior managing director at Evercore Partners, an investment firm, and an adjunct professor at Columbia's business school. He has represented a number of newspaper and broadcasting companies including, currently, Freedom Communications.

# **Passion for the 'Minor Leagues'**

Nurturing devotion in an increasingly corporate community press



lmost three years ago, I left a small, family-owned newspaper in western New York to launch the Center for Community Journalism's newsroom training initiative. Since then I've visited small daily and weekly newspapers as a kind of circuit-riding journal-

BY JOHN HATCHER ist, offering advice and spreading the gospel of great community journalism. And hearing complaints.

I've seen the professionalism, dedication, and honor that come from serving a community — be it in rural Kansas or New York City's busiest boroughs. But I've also talked with too many journalists at small papers who are disenchanted with their profession. They say they feel pressured to produce more and more stories regardless of the quality of the work. They complain that they get no feedback on how to improve their writing. And, ultimately, they begin to wonder if they should look elsewhere for a career that satisfies their desire to make a difference.

What's missing from these newsrooms? I have a theory. The missing ingredient is passion.

Economically, community journalism is certainly holding its own. Between 1965 and 2000, America's weekly newspapers nearly tripled in circulation to a combined 71 million, according to the National Newspaper Association. This growth attracted the interest of national newspaper groups. By 2001, an estimated 75 percent of the nation's weekly newspapers were part of chains, some of them very large. Liberty Group Publishing, for example, owns 290 newspapers nationwide. Community Newspaper Holdings, Inc., owns 214; and Hollinger International, Inc., owns more than 240 English-language papers in the United States and abroad.

Stephen Lacy, director of the Michigan State University journalism school and an expert on community journalism, says it is dangerous to assume that group ownership is always bad and independent ownership always good. Still, more often than not public ownership changes a paper's priorities. "The difference comes down to who's making the decisions," says Lacy. "Who has the power to decide the goals of the paper? If you give that power to the stock market, those goals are different."

For instance, when a newspaper group owns a cluster of weeklies around a metropolitan area, young journalists can find themselves running these papers as the sole reporter, photographer, copy editor, and editor, with little guidance or training.

The nation's small dailies and weeklies are often denigrated, considered the minor leagues of the profession. Sadly, too few do enough to separate themselves from the shoppers and penny-savers that pile up on the doorstep. Yet I've heard many journalists say that their time at small papers was the best part of their careers. Some never left. They developed the responsibility and courage it takes to report unpopular news, and the sense of pride that comes with celebrating the good news. They learned that great journalism comes not only through covering a community, but also from being part of it.

And the picture is not all dark. Independently owned papers with passion can be found all around the nation. Sally Gray started working as a reporter and copy editor for Howard Kessinger and his wife and co-publisher, Sharon, at *The Marysville* (Kansas) *Advocate* in 1982. She has no intention of leaving this 6,000-circulation weekly. "Howard and Sharon work beside us every week," Gray says. "They're not just sitting in an office barking out orders." When Gray wanted to see one of her children perform in a Christmas concert, Sharon, the paper's co-publisher, covered a meeting for her.

In Brooklyn, Garry Pierre-Pierre founded *The Haitian Times* in 1999 to give second-generation Haitian-Americans a voice. "The problem with small papers is the reporters there are thinking about the next stop along their career, and so they are only there to do penance," Pierre-Pierre says.

A former reporter for *The New York Times*, Pierre-Pierre knows that the rewards aren't always tied to circulation size. "I can tell you that I think that the passion is still there," he says. "Every community newspaper is *The New York Times* of its community."

In Point Reyes, California, Dave Mitchell, whose weekly newspaper, *The Point Reyes Light*, won the Pulitzer gold medal for Public Service in 1979, says that in recent years he has sent reporters to Switzerland, Croatia, Ireland, and the Azores to report on the history of his community's immigrant roots. How could his tiny newspaper afford to do this? "I simply decided that I, Dave Mitchell, would not buy a car this year," Mitchell says.

John Hatcher is education director for the Center for Community Journalism at the State University of New York at Oswego and a Sunday columnist for *The Daily Messenger* in Canandaigua, New York. Fill your openings
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# LISTS

# The Pulitzer Prizes



#### **Public Service**

The Boston Globe
Finalists: The Detroit News;
Pensacola News Journal

#### **Breaking News Reporting**

The Eagle-Tribune staff, Lawrence, Massachusetts
Finalists: the Baltimore Sun staff;
The Seattle Times staff

#### **Investigative Reporting**

Clifford J. Levy, The New York Times Finalists: Alan Miller and Kevin Sack, the Los Angeles Times; The Seatle Times staff

#### **Explanatory Reporting**

The Wall Street Journal staff
Finalists: Jim Haner, John B.
O'Donnell, and Kimberly A.C. Wilson,
the Baltimore Sun;
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel staff

#### **Beat Reporting**

Diana K. Sugg, the Baltimore Sun Finalists: Cameron W. Barr, The Christian Science Monitor; David Cay Johnston, The New York Times

#### **National Reporting**

Alan Miller and Kevin Sack, the Los Angeles Times Finalists: The Chicago Tribune staff; Anne Hull, The Washington Post; The New York Times staff

#### **International Reporting**

Kevin Sullivan and Mary Jordan, The Washington Post Finalists: Alix M. Freedman and Steve Stecklow, The Wall Street Journal; R.C. Longworth, the Chicago Tribune

#### **Feature Writing**

Sonia Nazario, the *Los Angeles Times* Finalists: Connie Schultz, *The Plain Dealer*, Cleveland; David Stabler, *The Oregonian*, Portland

#### Commentary

Colbert I. King, The Washington Post Finalists: Edward Achorn, The Providence Journal; Mark Holmberg, Richmond Times-Dispatch

#### Criticism

Stephen Hunter, *The Washington Post* Finalists: John King, the *San Francisco Chronicle*; Nicolai Ouroussoff, the *Los Angeles Times* 

#### **Editorial Writing**

Cornelia Grumman, the Chicago Tribune Finalists: Robert L. Pollock, The Wall Street Journal; Linda Valdez, The Arizona Republic, Phoenix

#### **Editorial Cartooning**

David Horsey, the Seattle Post-Intelligencer Finalists: Rex Babin, The Sacramento Bee; Clay Bennett, The Christian Science Monitor

### Breaking News Photography Rocky Mountain News

photography staff
Finalists: Carolyn Cole,
the Los Angeles Times;
The Washington Times photography staff

#### **Feature Photography**

Don Bartletti, the *Los Angeles Times*Finalists: Matt Black,
the *Los Angeles Times*;
Brad Clift, *The Hartford Courant* 

#### **LETTERS AND DRAMA**

#### **Fiction**

Middlesex by Jeffrey Eugenides (Farrar, Straus & Giroux) Finalists: Servants of the Map: Stories by Andrea Barrett (W.W. Norton); You Are Not a Stranger Here by Adam Haslett (Nan A. Talese/Doubleday)

#### Drama

Anna in the Tropics by Nilo Cruz Finalists: The Goat or Who Is Sylvia? by Edward Albee; Take Me Out by Richard Greenberg

#### History

An Army at Dawn: The War in North Africa, 1942-1943 by Rick Atkinson (Henry Holt)

Finalists: At the Hands of Persons Unknown: The Lynching of Black America by Philip Dray (Random House); Rereading Sex: Battles Over Sexual Knowledge and Suppression in Nineteenth Century America by Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz (Alfred A. Knopf)

#### **Biography**

Master of the Senate by Robert A. Caro (Alfred A. Knopf)

Finalists: The Fly Swatter: How My Grandfather Made His Way in the World by Nicholas Dawidoff (Pantheon Books); Beethoven: The Music and the Life by Lewis Lockwood (W.W. Norton)

#### Poetry

Moy Sand and Gravel: Poems by Paul Muldoon (Farrar, Straus & Giroux) Finalists: Music Like Dirt by Frank Bidart (Sarabande Books); Hazmat by J.D. McClatchy (Alfred A. Knopf)

#### **General Non-Fiction**

"A Problem from Hell": America and the Age of Genocide by Samantha Power (Basic Books)

Finalists: The Anthropology of Turquoise: Meditations on Landscape, Art, and Spirit by Ellen Meloy (Pantheon Books); The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Human Nature by Steven Pinker (Viking)

#### Music

On the Transmigration of Souls by John Adams

Finalists: *Three Tales* by Steve Reich; *Camp Songs* by Paul Schoenfield

# YOU MADE your deadline and the front page.

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The Newspaper Guild-CWA proudly celebrates this year's Guild recipients of our profession's greatest honor: The Pulitzer Prize.



Stephen Hunter The Washington Post Criticism



Mary Jordan
The Washington Post
International Reporting



Clifford J. Levy The New York Times Investigative Reporting



Diana K. Sugg The Baltimore Sun Beat Reporting

In addition, the staffs of three Guild-represented newspapers won Pulitzers collectively:

The Boston Globe Public Service The Wall Street Journal Explanatory Reporting Rocky Mountain News Breaking News Photography

The Guild also congratulates **Andy Furillo** of the Sacramento Bee, the winner of the 2002 Heywood Broun Award for his stories on a once-flourishing neighborhood's decline into blocks of crime-ridden, substandard housing.



# LISTS

#### The duPont Awards

Here are the winners of the Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Awards in Television and Radio Journalism.

#### **Gold Baton**

Frontline and WGBH, Boston for a seven-program series about the origin and impact of terrorism by Islamic militants

#### **Silver Batons**

ABC News for Nightline: Heart of Darkness

ABC News Television and Radio for coverage of 9/11 and Answering Children's Questions

CNN en Español and Jorge Gestoso for La Doble Desaparecida

Court TV and Lumiere Productions for Ghosts of Attica HBO for In Memoriam: New York City 9/11/01

KPBS, San Diego, and Lee Harvey for Culture of Hate: Who Are We?

National Public Radio for coverage of 9/11 and the war in Afghanistan

NBC News and Martin Fletcher for coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

P.O.V. (on PBS) and Tasha Oldham for The Smith Family American Experience (on PBS), Steeplechase Films, Sierra Club Productions, and WGBH for Ansel Adams: A Documentary Film

WBUR-FM, Boston, for Surviving Torture: Inside Out

WCVB-TV, Boston, for Chronicle: Beyond the Big Dig

WFAA-TV, Dallas, Brett Shipp and Mark Smith for Fake Drugs, Real Lives

#### **National Magazine Award Winners**

#### **General Excellence**

(Over 2,000,000 circ.)
Parenting
Finalists
National Geographic
Newsweek

O, The Oprah Magazine

Sports Illustrated
(1,000,000 to 2,000,000 circ.)

ESPN The Magazine
Finalists
Discover
Entertainment Weekly
Fortune
Real Simple
Vanity Fair

(500,000 to 1,000,000 circ.) The Atlantic Monthly Finalists Condé Nast Traveler Esquire

House & Garden The New Yorker

(250,000 to 500,000 circ.) *Texas Monthly* 

Finalists
National Geographic Adventure
Saveur
Skiing
W Magazine

(100,000 to 250,000 circ.) Architectural Record Finalists Harper's Magazine Mother Jones Nylon (Under 100,000 circ.)
Foreign Policy

Finalists

The American Scholar The Chronicle of Higher Education JD Jungle STEP inside design

#### **Personal Service**

Personal Servi Outside Finalists BusinessWeek Money My Generation Newsweek

Leisure Interests

National Geographic Adventure Finalists Esquire Sports Illustrated Time Out New York Vogue

Reporting The New Yorker

Finalists
The Atlantic Monthly
Newsweek
The New Yorker (second
nomination)
Sports Illustrated

**Public Interest** 

The Atlantic Monthly Finalists Golf for Women Harper's Magazine National Review Newsweek Texas Monthly

#### **Feature Writing**

Harper's Magazine Finalists GQ Men's Journal The New Yorker Outside

## Columns and Commentary

The Nation
Finalists
Fortune
New York
The New Yorker
Vanity Fair

#### **Essays**

The American Scholar Finalists The Atlantic Monthly The New Yorker Self Vanity Fair

### Reviews and Criticism Vanity Fair

Finalists
The Atlantic Monthly (two nominations)
Harper's Magazine
The New Yorker

#### **Profile Writing**

Sports Illustrated
Finalists
The Atlantic Monthly
GQ
Harper's Magazine
Outside

#### Single-Topic Issue

Scientific American Finalists GQ Popular Science Technology Review Texas Monthly

#### Design

Details
Finalists
Dwell
Esquire
Nest
Surface

#### Photography

Condé Nast Traveler Finalists Elegant Bride GQ National Geographic Vanity Fair

#### Fiction

The New Yorker

Finalists
Book
The Georgia Review (two
nominations)
The New Yorker (second nomination)

## General Excellence Online

Slate
Finalists
The Chronicle of Higher
Education
CNET News.com
National Geographic Online
Style.com

Preservation



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#### 2003 Goldsmith Prize for Investigative Reporting

#### The Boston Globe — "Crisis in the Catholic Church"

Matthew Carroll, Kevin Cullen, Thomas Farragher, Stephen Kurkjian, Michael Paulson, Sacha Pfeiffer, Michael Rezendes and Walter V. Robinson

Globe reporters chronicled a burgeoning scandal that has seen dozens of priests stand accused of abuse. It is a scandal that has spread beyond the Boston Archdiocese to other states and countries. The series ultimately led to the resignation of Cardinal Law, once the nation's most influential Catholic prelate.

#### **Finalists**

# The Dayton Daily News — "Down on the Factory: Cheap Food, Hidden Costs"

Mike Wagner, Ben Sutherly, Laura Bischoff, Ken McCall, Dale Dempsey and Martha Hild

The investigative team documented how neglect and passive oversight of megafarms is harming the environment and endangering public health.

## National Public Radio — "Oruzgan Raid"

Steve Inskeep

Reporter Steve Inskeep uncovered a deadly mistake by the U.S. military in Oruzgan, Afghanistan on January 24, 2002, which resulted in the deaths of at least 15 people and detention of 27.

## The New York Times — "Tax Cheats"

David Cay Johnston
Johnston exposed numerous tricks used by
companies to avoid tens
of billions of dollars in
U.S. taxes each year. He
also exposed accounting
firm practices in which
taxable profits were
transformed into expenses
that were then deducted

# WFAA-TV, Dallas — "Fake Drugs, Real Lives" Brett Shipp and

Mark Smith

on tax returns.

This series questioned the legitimacy of drug seizures made by Dallas police and their paid confidential informants. The report helped spur the dismissal of drug charges against more than 50 defendants.

# The Wisconsin State Journal — "Corruption in the Wisconsin Capitol"

Phil Brinkman, Dee J. Hall and Scott Milfred

This ongoing investigation of illegal campaigning and fundraising in the Wisconsin State Legislature has prompted felony charges against the Legislature's top leaders and a promise of reform.

#### Special Citation

# The San Francisco Chronicle — "The Campus Files: Reagan, Hoover and the UC Red Scare"

Seth Rosenfeld

In a seventeen-year pursuit of truth, Seth Rosenfeld fought a legal battle to win the right to tell the story of how the Federal Bureau of Investigation had misused its power.

## Goldsmith Book Prize Winners

#### Best Academic Book

Doris A. Graber, University of Illinois at Chicago, for Processing Politics: Learning from Television in the Internet Age

#### Best Trade Book

Leonard Downie Jr. and Robert G. Kaiser for The News About the News: American Journalism in Peril

For more information visit the Shorenstein Center website: www.shorensteincenter.org

## THE BIAS BUSTERS' BALL

BY LIZ COX

On the evening of March 27, employees of the Media Research Center — along with sponsors ranging from the National Rifle Association to the National Review (which paid between \$1,500 and \$25,000 each), individual supporters (at \$150 to \$175 a head), and members of a Congressional Host Committee (twenty-five Republicans and a Democrat, Ralph M. Hall of Texas) - gathered in the Regency Ballroom at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington D.C. for the third annual Media Research Center DisHonors Awards "roasting the most outrageously biased liberal reporting of 2002." The stones were flying in that glass house.

Fox News Channel's Cal Thomas, in black tie, welcomed the 800 or so revelers with a reminder of the evening's objective. "Tonight," Thomas said, "we will expose the insincerity, the bias, the anti-Americanism, and class warfare of the media elite." It was a rough paraphrase of the Media Research Center's (MRC) everyday mission — to which it directs its \$6 million annual budget - of "documenting, exposing and neutralizing" purported liberal media bias. After a quick Bill Moyers joke and a jab at Eric Alterman, Thomas restated the night's purpose more succinctly: to deliver "to the liberal press our version of shock and awe."

Thomas's Fox News Channel colleague, Sean Hannity, commenced the shock treatment by presenting the Ozzy Osbourne Award for Wackiest Comment of the Year, the first of the night's six prizes. Each award was selected by a panel of

fifteen judges — sharp-eyed bias-spotters all — including William F. Buckley, Jr., Steve Forbes, John Fund, Lucianne Goldberg, Lawrence Kudlow, Rush Limbaugh, Robert Novak, Kate O'Beirne, Michael Reagan, and R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr. Owing to a remark he made about Saddam Hussein's electoral mandate — that Saddam won "99.96 percent of the vote," but that "it is impossible to say" whether it is "a true measure of the Iraqi people's feelings" — David Wright of ABC's World News Tonight edged out Hearst's Helen Thomas and ABC's George Stephanopoulos to take the first trophy.

For the And They Called it Puppy Love Award, Barbara Walters triumphed over The New York Times's Howell Raines and CNBC's Brian Williams. Walters's wayward words? During an interview with Fidel Castro, she noted that "if literacy alone were the yardstick, Cuba would rank as one of the freest nations on earth," as its "literacy rate is 96 percent." Laura Ingraham, a radio talk-show host and author of The Hillary Trap, explained to the crowd that the Puppy Love award "goes to the journalist who did his or her best last year to fawn over a liberal hero." Ingraham then gave her own fulsome introduction to the "hero of the conservative movement," Judge Robert Bork, who was — wink, wink — accepting the award "on Walters's behalf." The heretofore subdued audience obliged with a standing ovation and clinked their dinner utensils against their glasses.

Next, Ingraham announced the Ashamed of the Red, White, and Blue Award, given, she said, "to that journalist who made the most | Liz Cox is an assistant editor at CIR.



CAL THOMAS. ANN COULTER. **SEAN HANNITY** 

outrageous statement distancing himself from his country in a time of war." Winner: the wellknown journalist Bill Maher. To

be sure, there was no such "distancing" in the Regency Ballroom, where red, white, and blue lightprojected stars rotated disco-like on the walls, flag lapel pins abounded, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited twice (with emphasis on the words "under God"). In fact, in its livelier moments the place had the feel of a pep rally, with Hannity as head cheerleader for the "coalition of the winning," gleefully observing that "our military" hits its targets "again and again and again."

Ann Coulter, author of Slander: Liberal Lies About the American Right, was on hand to announce Bill Moyers's first win of the night — the I Hate You Conservatives Award — for his com-

mentary on the Bush administration (in part, "If you like God in government, get ready for the Rapture"). These same words earned Movers the Quote of the Year, though he could not be there to pick up his prizes because, Tony Blankley of The Washington Times informed the audience, he was "embedded in his limousine."

The night reached an aural climax when L. Brent Bozell III, the MRC's founder and president, took the stage to discuss the war "for public opinion" that his organization is waging, and to tally, in his estimation, the ammunition stockpiled by the Left and the Right. "They have ABC, NBC, CBS, CNN, CNBC, MSNBC, and PBS," Bozell shouted, to affirmative crowd noise. "We have Fox, and that's just fine."

As the musical guest, Charlie Daniels, tuned his fiddle on the stage at the rear of the ballroom, Bozell acknowledged the MRC staffers, whom Cal Thomas had earlier described as "analytical sleuths" who "combed through hundreds of thousands of stories to find the most outrageous instances of bias." Similar attention to detail was apparently not extended to the evening's threecourse dinner menu, which was helpfully printed in the program. On a night when the French were the butt of more than one wellreceived joke, guests dined happily on grilled filet mignon, gratin Dauphinois, and sautéed French haricots verts. The red wine was from the blue state of California.

# The Lower case

# Iraq rewards family of suicide attacker who killed four Americans with money

Odessa American (Odessa, Tex.) 3/31/00

12 people hurt in war protest at Oakland port

The Daily Oklahoman 4/8/03

American troops urged to stop looting, chaos

Daily Freeman (Kingston, N.Y.) 4/12/03

# Anti-Youth Gun Violence Program Planned

County wants eyes out for child abuse

The Davis Enterprise (Davis, Calif.) 1/31/03

Help us make a better newspaper

We're planning a new community newspaper and we wnat your help.

The Light (Newport Beach, Calif.) 3/27/03

Warmest weekend ahead in 6 months

Chicago Tribune 3/14/03

Lottery winner sold in Dublin

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution 4/11/03

Millions Pledged to Dump Cleanup

Los Angeles Times 2/15/03

Teacher charged with having sex with student didn't have license

Kenosha News (Kenosha, Wis.) 2/6/03

Litchfield Urging Visitors to Try A Quickie; Merchants Complain

The Litchfield County Times (Litchfield County, Conn.) 1/7/03

It's time to deep-six toddler giving high-fives

The Post-Standard (Syracuse, N.Y.) 2/03/03



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